



TAMPERE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

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**ONLINE BRANDING STRATEGIES-MODERN BRANDING AID
FOR SME(S)**

Master of Science Thesis

Prof. Dr. Artur Lugmayr & Professor Miia Martinsuo have been appointed as the examiners at the Council Meeting of the Faculty of Business and Technology Management on February 5th, 2014

ABSTRACT

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Branding is of the essence in present times. Businesses today are more than manufacturers or suppliers of products and services. Similarly, consumers in these times consider and expect more from a product or a company than mere features and benefits. Companies that understand the significance of branding are always a step ahead. This is what branding is about, actions or the strategy that improves the perceived value of a brand or product line. This in return does not only increase the sales, but give birth to everlasting consumer loyalty. But for firms with limited resources and expertise, such as SMEs and Startups, executing conventional branding strategies is often out of the question. Online and novel branding strategies have a lot of potential to aid such small and new firms.

The objective of this thesis is to study online and other novel branding strategies that SMEs or small companies can utilize to better brand themselves and look into the issues such companies face in their branding processes. In order to achieve this, the most relevant literature and frameworks were followed to critically look at the focused strategies and couple it with real time study of the branding methods followed by two companies (TeamUp Oy and PitchMe Inc.).

The final outcome of this report is that online and novel branding strategies are critical for all types and sizes of businesses. The use of such new approaches despite being slow, can aid branding of a product or a service regardless of the firm lacking huge financial resources. In Finland, where the market consists of large numbers of SMEs and ever growing number of Startups, the attitude towards the concept of branding needs to change. So, it is pivotal for all companies to consider branding as a key component of their business processes. Whether SME, Startup or large organizations. The outreach of internet and mobile technology is limitless, and when this is coupled with offline efforts, positives results are inevitable.

PREFACE

The research study focuses on online and novel branding strategies in the current business scenario for SMEs and Startups. It also looks at conventional branding methods and the limitations associated with them. In addition to that, some online and novel branding strategies are thoroughly studied with the help of existing article and literature. Though not much literature is available, but efforts were made to find any supporting data and literature.

Literature is coupled with interviews of two companies and analyzing their respective models to have a realistic understanding. But the objective of this thesis could not have been completed without the consistent and critical consultation from my supervisor. I cannot thank Prof. Dr. Artur Lugmayr and Professor Miia Martinsuo enough for their endless support, guidance and encouragement. I would also like to pay my gratitude to Ms. Donna Lynne Kivirauma (CEO, TeamUp), Mr. Josef Pacal (CPO, PitchMe) and Mr. Miika Kenttämies (CMO, PitchMe) for their keen participation. Finally, I would like to also thank all my friends and family members for their continuous support.

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Hassan Aman

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ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTATION

SME	Small & Medium Sized Enterprises
OBS	Online Branding Strategies
BM	Brand Management
MBranding	Mobile Branding
CS	Crowd Sourcing
CF	Crowd Funding

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Branding

Terms such branding, brand have become a normal word of mouth in today's world and at times understood for different meaning. In the last two decades or so, the phenomenon of branding has become a fundamental and mandatory part of firms as well as individuals. According to Melissa Davis (2009), the suffering of a brand equally damages the company as a whole. Similarly, a firm brand will strengthen the company. But what is a brand or branding?

The general understanding by common people is any standard logo is a brand, and the process is branding. But that is all in layman's terms. The true meaning translates a whole concept, decorum of a certain product offering by a company. It is often the medium between the producer and consumer. It is a full personality of a firm and acts as an interface between the buyer and the supplier (Melissa Davis, 2009). One cannot define a brand as something completely physical as it encompasses a variety of things, ranging from physical traits, emotions to ones understanding of it. It is a combination of both the tangible and intangible. So it can be defined in terms of the product traits, organizational structure, end consumers' perception as well as the stakeholders of a company itself.

Many understand branding as a collection of marketing, product name and logos. But branding in its true meaning not only includes the developing of a brand, but sustaining it through the times of change. It requires the complete knowledge of firm wise operations, from employees to products, to process systems. Most today, consider branding no less than the spine of an organization since it clarifies the position of a firm in the market it is acting. Sustaining through the times of change refers to ability to adapt timely and accurately in order meet the market needs and wants. Markets, especially when referring to B2C arenas are comprised of societies, and societies are never in status quo. This does not necessarily mean a complete change to an existing brand due to an economical or a social climate change, but it does always require adequate adjustment of its position in a business arena. There was a time in the early 90s, when Samsung was consider a high-end electronics brand in Russia, while at the same time was perceived no more than ordinary lower-end name in most of Europe. But it was their understanding and development of a sustainable branding process that helped them turn into a global high-end electronics brand today. A good branding strategy will not only help a brand develop, but mature in a market that is already saturated in nature. That is exactly what names like Google, McDonalds, Samsung, Sony, KFC, Apple, Microsoft have successfully achieved. These are some big names, and most of them were already quite

big in business before or during the branding process, but when it comes to enterprises which are of small or of medium nature or Small and Medium Enterprises (SME), developing a brand becomes an expensive as well a difficult task. As most of the conventional and old branding strategies would not be the appropriate options. Branding strategies such as, **Company Name Branding, Individual Branding, No-Brand Branding, Attitude Branding & Iconic Branding, Multi Brands Strategy, Cannibalization, Crowd-sourcing Branding, And Online Branding Strategies** will be studied, with more focus on Online and Modern Branding Strategies to consider a strategy for SMEs.

1.1.1. Company, Corporate Name Branding

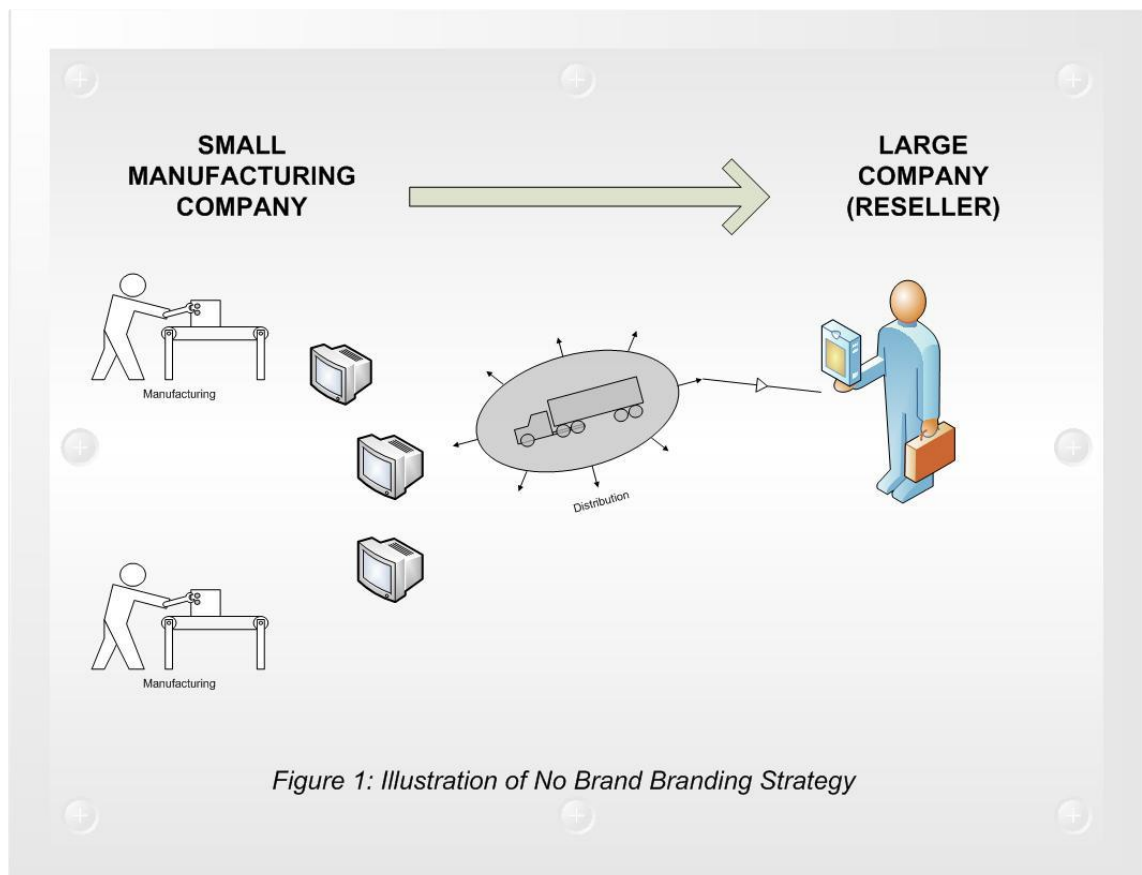
It is quite clear from the name of this strategy that Company or Corporate Brand name strategy refers to a strong corporate name that would use it develop products, and enter a market in order to sustain and mature in it. It may also include a variety of subsidiary brands of a mother brand to offer different product offerings in different business arenas and geographies. Whatever a corporate holds, it tries to use it or some of it as a way to interact with the consumers. According to Majken, Yun Mi and Fabian Csaba (2005), it is rather a simple concept where the corporate firm interfaces itself with the stakeholders using what it holds. The emphasis is on the firm itself and its competitive edge in the market. Such a branding strategy is clearly not an option for SMEs.

1.1.2. Individual Branding

Every brand basically has its own brand name and because of this it is naturally put into a competitive environment, most often in front or against other brands of a common mother firm. The advantage of such a branding strategy is its flexible nature to let products with different characteristics and nature to act and succeed in a market. Each brand acts and performs individually, according to Flemming Hansen and Lars B. Christensen (2003), each acts as a stand-alone brand with or without the need of any aid from the company. This is the reason why, one would not often see the corporate brand in Kool-Aid or Tang advertisements. The individual brand is often accompanied by a label or a sub brand, this way adding more sense to the concept of individual branding. SMEs, in most cases during the early stages of development may find it really difficult if not impossible to enter a saturated market with an individual brand of their own, and secondly would need to invest heavily in marketing and advertising campaigns to make their presence felt.

1.1.3. No-Brand Branding

Since the focus is on branding solutions for SMEs (and, or StartUps) with primary focus on OBS, this strategy can yet help small enterprises. The main problem with such businesses is the difficulty they face while developing a brand. This can range from monetary costs, expertise requirements and market position related complexities. The idea of No-Brand strategy when used by SMEs is to locate and get into agreements with comparatively larger businesses or customers and use them to sell their brands. The basic concept is reselling a product but under a different brand as illustrated in Figure. 1. According to Jakki, Sanjit and Stanley (2009) , it is a good start for new small and medium size companies, where large companies sell a product from a small company but under its (large company's) own brand name. Samsung, which started its business as a small semiconductor manufacturer is one such great example. If an SME decides to develop a brand of its own, and idealizes to have direct contact with end consumers from the start, then doing it without branding might not be possible. And for branding it would require expert creativity in marketing. Such expertise at a low budget are difficult to find. This is why many companies have started with the No-Brand branding strategy, and with time successfully developed their own brands.



1.1.4. Attitude Branding

Quite often abnormal to the ears, attitude branding strategies inculcates the idea of presenting whole new and bigger sense and quite surprisingly it cannot always be related to the product offering, or with the sales. The brand expresses itself, often connected to the feelings of the consumers, adding more meaning to the whole experience. It defines a lifestyle rather than a brand you want to put on, made up of ethics, appearances, concepts and beliefs.

1.1.5. Multi Brands Strategy

This branding strategy is pretty simple, a firm may decide to launch or introduce multiple products which may be competing in nature. It is quite natural to raise the suspicion of cannibalism, which will be discussed later. The major advantage that a firm can get from Multi Brands strategy is that it is able to compete with other firms and their product offerings by acquiring more shelf space. In this way, companies can saturate the markets with their products. But multi branding strategy should not be considered a short term strategy, according to Jean-Noel Kapferer (2008), this strategy will make sense on the long term if the individual products are able develop their own identity by covering their own proximity. And this is one important thing which many companies applying this strategy, intentionally or unintentionally overlook.

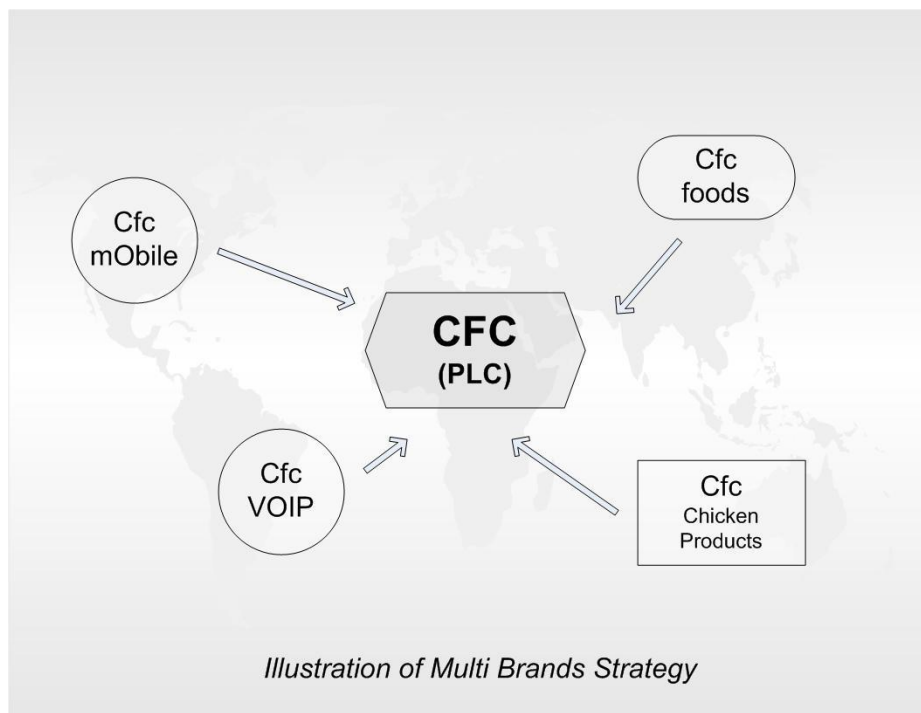


Figure 2: Schematic example of a Multi Brands Strategy

1.1.6. Cannibalization

The consumer market segments today are primarily driven by factors such as aesthetics, style and fashion. And due to this innovation is becoming more and more demanding. Businessmen can take this to their advantage to form branding strategy. Question arises, how? One of the easiest ways to achieve this by substituting current products with new ones, at the same time keeping the supply for the current products limited during or before the replacement phase. Many corporate brands have successfully utilized this strategic cannibalization by producing varieties of product offerings but keeping their supplies limited. This stimulates the buyer with the feeling of “missing the chance” of purchasing a certain product brand. In some cases, especially in terms of multi brands approach, cannibalization may appear to putting an existing brand/product out of the business, but if synchronized and product supply made limited adequately, this can be good approach towards overall gains.

As discussed in these conventional branding strategies, companies either have a good position in the market already, or a renowned brand in the offering. Secondly, for intensive marketing and branding, it requires high costs. While SMEs, especially new startups find it really difficult to get noticed or attract attention in a saturated market. Online and other novel branding strategies will be discussed in later chapters to build a base for aiding SMEs with a branding solution.

1.2. Research Objective(s)

Branding in today's competing markets has become mandatory, it is more than a buzz, it is a holistic concept of marketing that a company utilize to advantage. Its benefits can be both online and offline. Understanding and creating an equilibrium to manage as well as balance the corporate system with the product brands in order to leverage brand equities throughout the firm is the first strive towards fruitful branding effort. In other words, it is pivotal to understand the brand architecture for an organization. This aids all the strategies that the corporate takes or devises to develop and sustain a brand. Able to do so, firms are able to successfully able to surface them self in saturated business arenas. For established organizations, branding has become a fundamental part as well as process of their business, equally it is important for SMEs but as discussed earlier, branding for such small to medium sized enterprises and startups is very much an unattainable goal using the conventional strategies due to the reasons discussed previously. In addition to that, the understanding of proper brand management techniques and customer value, as these concepts make the fundamentals of understanding branding architecture.

Therefore the core research objective of this research to “*study online and other novel branding strategies that SMEs (and, or StartUps) can utilize for branding themselves*”.

This research study tries to explain and answer:

- Brand Management and its significance for SMEs
- What are Online Branding Strategies?
- What other novel ways for branding are available for SMEs?
- Creating value online.
- Can SMEs brand themselves with these novel methods and strategies?

1.3. Structure of Research

The research structure basically comprises of Online Branding and Novel Branding branding strategies, studied in light of the fundamentals of brand management and customer value.

- Chapter 1: Understanding of the branding concept, conventional branding strategies and research objectives.
- Chapter 2: The research methodology followed to complete the objectives of research, the techniques followed to complete the research. The use of literature, findings and interviews.
- Chapter 3: Theoretical aspects of Brand Management, the basics and core frameworks,
- Chapter 4: Theoretical aspects of Online Branding Strategies and their practicality with SMEs in these competitive times.
- Chapter 5: Understanding SMEs & Branding, Importance of BM in such companies, Issues & Problems, Case Branding Frameworks, Suggestions and Solutions
- Chapter 6 Finding possibilities for SMEs to use online and novel branding strategies to easily brand themselves without heavily investing in marketing and creative expertise.

2. Research Methodology

This section explains the research methodology followed in order to provide to understand, investigate and answer the questions that were raised in the previous chapter. Since, the primary focus is on novel concepts of branding, the approach is exploratory and qualitative in nature. The reason for the research method being qualitative as well as exploratory is because it helps in better defining the design of research, selection of subjects and qualitative data. This does not mean these are the only ways to conduct the research, others ways could also be followed. This chapter further explains the basis of topic selection, how the questions were formed and how data was collected through literature study and interviews. In the end, the chapter tries to explain the reliability and validity of the approach.

2.1. Research Strategy

As briefly discussed above, the research strategy chosen is qualitative exploratory in order to better understand how online and other novel branding strategies can be used to benefit the branding process for SMEs. Exploratory research helps better identify problems and listing priorities in a research. According to Gilbert and Dawn (2009), exploratory research helps in gaining insights, ideas and breaks down rather large and unclear problems into smaller ones. Because of the field being pretty novel and unique in nature, less literature is available. But with the help of interviews, existing data, articles and theories, the research is conducted.

The first step in this research study is the use of all possible, available literature. The most important aspect here is the extent to which the literature studied is relevant to the topic. This can range from conceptual literature study to published statistics. Relevant literature combined with other sources of information help diagnose the problems more clearly, (Gilbert and Dawn, 2009). The literature selected for this research forms the ground for study and structuring the interview format.

The second step, primarily for qualitative data collection is interviews. The benefit of relevant qualitative interviews is that they provide a reliable source of information that help in developing and cross checking the reliability of facts and other data. According to Tom Wengraf (2001), qualitative interviews complete two purposes, testing a constructed model, as well as developing a model in accordance to reality. Another benefit of such interviews is exposing those problems which might not surface during literature study.

2.2. Research Process and Design

As discussed previously, the research initiated with literature review as a source of data collection to formulate questions for interviews and clarifying objectives and separating problems. The literature that majorly comprised of detailed concepts, frameworks, journals and reports, further formed a base for the research study. The biggest benefit of qualitative and exploratory research is its ability break vague problems into smaller ones, thus making the research design process a more convenient and understandable one. According to Joseph A. Maxwell (2012), the aim of research study is to aid the researcher in understanding the actual design of the research study, helping them structure to structure a methodology and conduct the research. Since one of the objectives of any research study is to structure the whole hypothesis in a manner that the reader finds it easy to understand and get information, the same intend was kept upfront while conducting the research. As Mark and Janina (2012) portray in their book “Research Design Explained” that understanding a research not only gives the reader first hand and updated information, but also help them analyze the gathered information.

In parallel to the literature study, interviews were structured and executed with relevant individuals. The interviews combined with the findings formed a solid information reserve. As Sterinar Kvale (1996) explains that qualitative research interviews is a firm ground to produce and gather knowledge and information about the subject under emphasis.

The interviews conducted included professionals from different businesses but the common point among all was the size of their business. Since the focus of the research is on SMEs, the interviewees were from small to medium sized enterprises with the primary focus of the interview being the problems faced in the branding of their business. All the collected data was then analyzed, any irrelevant data was reduced and the rest was categorized for research implications. Using the data, opportunities and threats were separated. Discussions with supervisors, industry experts and relevant individuals were conducted throughout the study before coming to the final conclusion. Figure 3. Illustrates a schematic flow of the research design process.

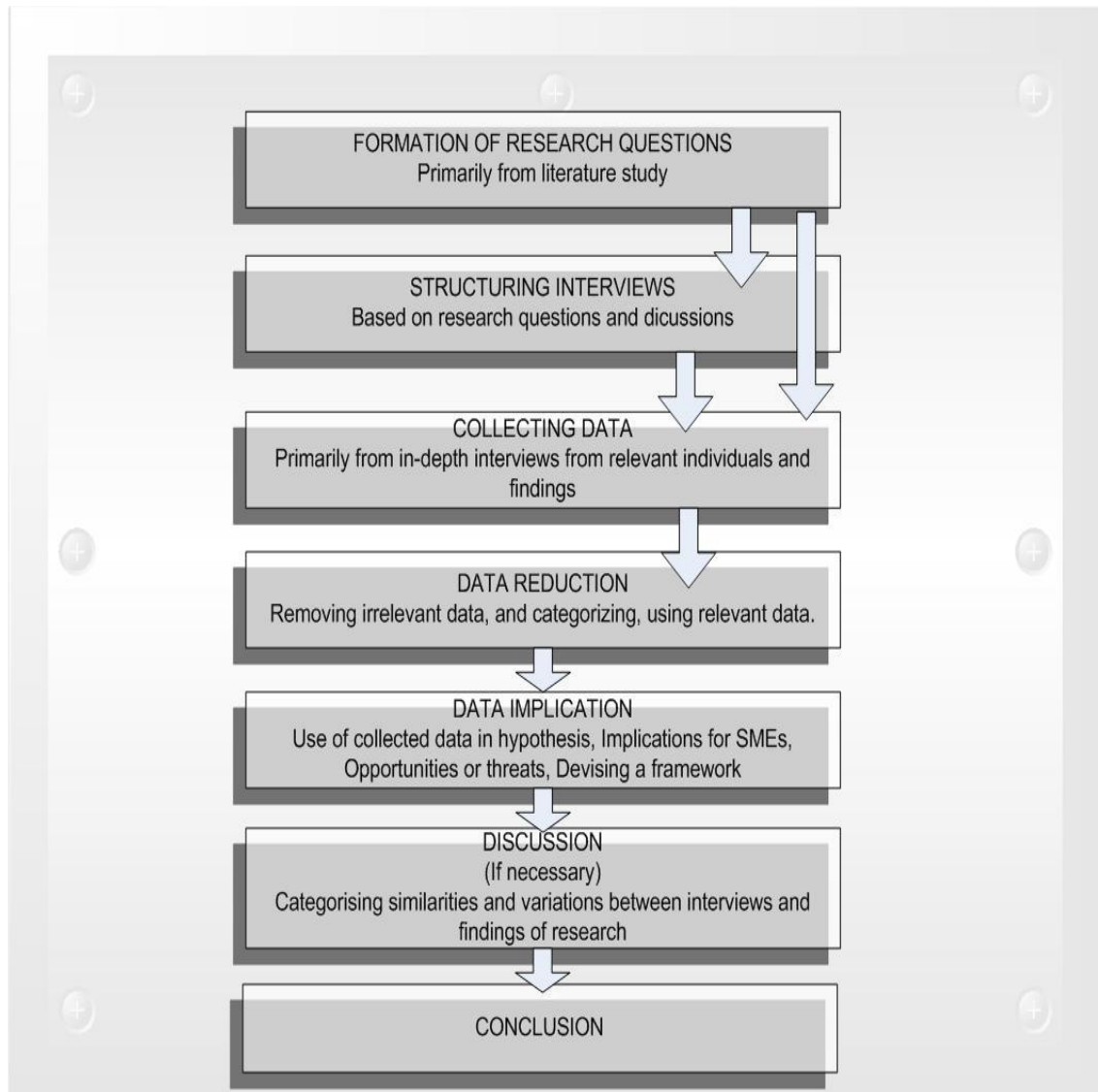


Figure 3: The Research Design Process Scheme

2.3. Reliability and Validity

The research study basis the foundation on the subject of branding, with more focus on Online and novel branding strategies as a branding aid for SMEs. The study also discusses branding fundamentals such as brand management and customer value in light of novel platforms to add more sense to the research study. (Name the industries Interviewed) are interviewed. This section of the chapter analyzes reliability and validity of the research study.

Reliability and validity go hand in hand with any qualitative research study, as Earl Robert Babbie (2009) portrays that when researchers go through literature and other sources of information for a given subject or material, it is natural to develop a measure of material

satisfaction during the research, the making of this measurement wants the researcher to also assess its validity. The research needs to be valid as well as reliable. A study that is reliable but not valid often has same effects as a research that is valid but not reliable. The study should be able to evaluate what is intended of it, resulting into a given measurement that is expected of it. In the simplest of words, validity is that prerequisite of a research that defines how close findings of a study can be to the facts and reality.

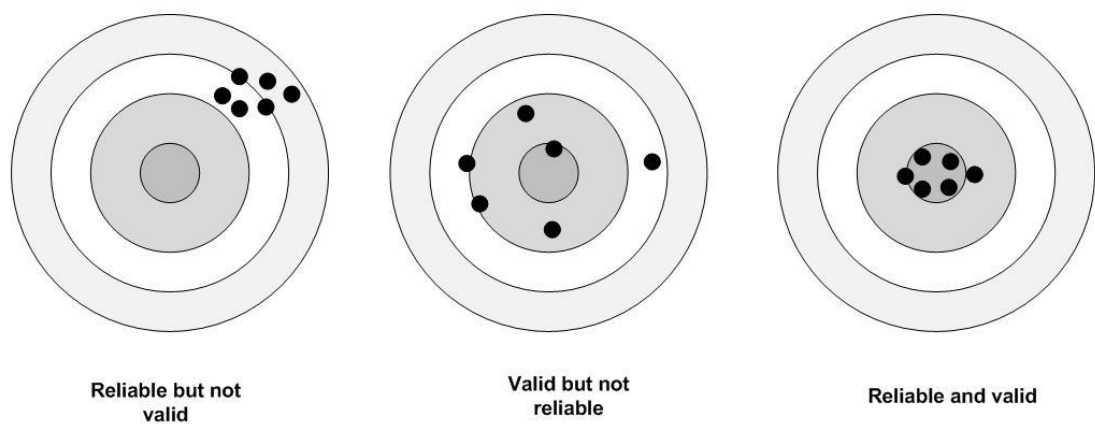


Figure 4: Reliability and Validity Illustration

According to Cohen and Manion (2013), validity demonstrates how accurately a particular research instrument measures what it is intended to explain. Exclusively in terms of qualitative and exploratory research, validity is defined in scope of how rich, detailed and truthful the collected data is. With the focus of this research study on branding aid for SMEs using modern and novel branding concepts, business professionals, marketing experts and entrepreneurs are chosen to get as accurate data and information, as humanly possible. The wide spectrum of perspective allowed the collection of valuable information, conflicting points and close-to-real measurements.

Additionally, reliability is the degree and extent to which a research study keeps repeating the same or close results. This defines the consistency of findings and when aided with validity, puts together a satisfactory qualitative research. Edward G. Carmines (1980) explains reliability as the tendency of qualitative research conduct by a researcher to repeatedly yield consistent results. Consistent results from repeated measurements and findings indicate higher reliability, and in case the results are not consistent, the outcome

is opposite. The reliability of this research built on interviews that are recorded and transcribed in order to use them for checking and cross checking the details. Further in the study, the following chapters will build the basics of brand management, online branding and novel branding strategies coupled with empirical data to devise a framework for SMEs.

3. Brand Management

3.1. Brand Management Today

As discussed previously, branding is the talk of the day. Firms of all shapes and sizes invest millions in brand activities. Businesses today are more than manufacturers or suppliers of products and services. Similarly, consumers in these times consider and expect more from a product or a company than mere features and benefits. Emotions and perceptions have interfered, or integrated in other words. Companies that understand the significance of this phenomenon are always a step ahead. This is what brand management is all about, actions or the strategy that improves the perceived value of a brand or product line. This in return does not only increase the sales, but give birth to everlasting consumer loyalty. This chapter discusses various brand management perspectives which have evolved and developed over time, but before that there are some key terminologies which are pivotal for the reader to understand.

- Brand architecture,
- Brand audit,
- Brand community,
- Brand culture,
- Brand equity,
- Brand essence,
- Brand extensions,
- Brand genealogy,
- Brand Icon,
- Brand Identity,
- Brand image,
- Brand loyalty,
- Brand personality,
- Brand portfolio,



Figure 5: Fundamental components of Brand Management

- **Brand Architecture**

Business gurus consider brand architecture as a fundamental pillar that organizes the whole skeleton of a brand's portfolio. In addition to that, it correlates the association among several brands in different market contexts. In brand management, this concept forms the building base of any brand, and that is the reason why it could possibly be the trickiest part of any brand management process. As Keith Dinnie (2007) inculcates, one cannot define any hard and fast rules or principles for brand architecture.

- **Brand Audit**

As the name suggests, in brand management, brand audit refers to the overall condition of a brand. It analyzes the health of any brand(s). According to Tilde Heding (2008), brand audit is a combination of brand inventory and exploratory that explains how a brand is marketed in a business arena. Where inventory refers to internal description of a brand, while brand exploratory investigates externally

how users and consumers of a certain brand associate themselves with the brand. Brand audit plays a pivotal role in the overall strategy of any brand, as Keller (2008) portrays it as a useful way to set a firm strategic direction in the branding process.

- **Brand Culture**

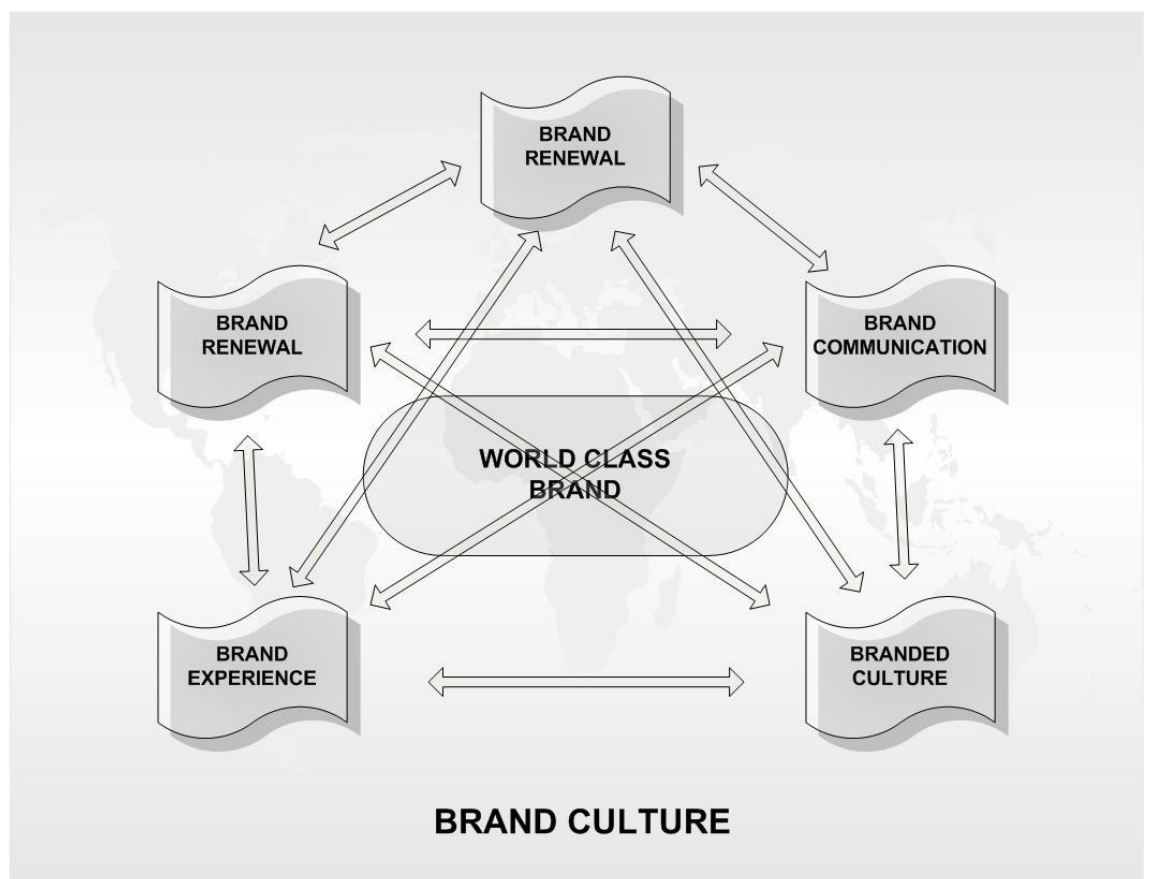


Figure 6: Constituents of Brand Culture

- **Brand Equity**

well as financial expression. With respect to financial understanding of brand equity, it is way to assess a brand in terms of the value a brand holds (Tilde Heding et. al, 2008). While the subjective understanding of brand equity specify the perceptions of customers of customers about the brand. Both understandings hold strategic value in brand management. A brand name makes sense to customers because they see value addition to the functional features of a product brand; brand equity with reference to subjective understanding.

- **Brand Essence**

Like other major constituents and fundamentals of brand management, brand essence has become a significant part of the branding process. Brands hold their identity and a have core which is normally refer to as brand essence. It provides a clear guideline during the initial planning process of brand management (Leslie de Chernatony, 2010). Brand essence is something abstract in nature as inculcated by many business gurus that defines the true soul and core of a brand.

- **Brand Extensions**

As discussed in previous chapters, branding today has become a fundamental need for organizations of all shapes and sizes, what is more important is the adaptability of these organizations in ever-changing times, thus making the branding process dynamic that would need modifications or changes according to the needs and wants. One such process in brand management is called Brand Extensions, which is a brand's adjustment or variation to a new and different product area (Thomas et. al, 2011). Often called as Brand Variant, the important aspect to consider is that it does change to a new product area but should never take away its focus from the brand's essence. As Tilde Heding et. al (2008) explains any variation from the core of the brand can risk dilution for both brands, new and original. Brand extensions are not done overnight nor it is an easy process. It requires serious time and knowledge investment and evaluation before the decision for brand extension is made. A famous evaluation model for brand extension by Milewicz and Herbig (1994) is illustrated in Figure 7.

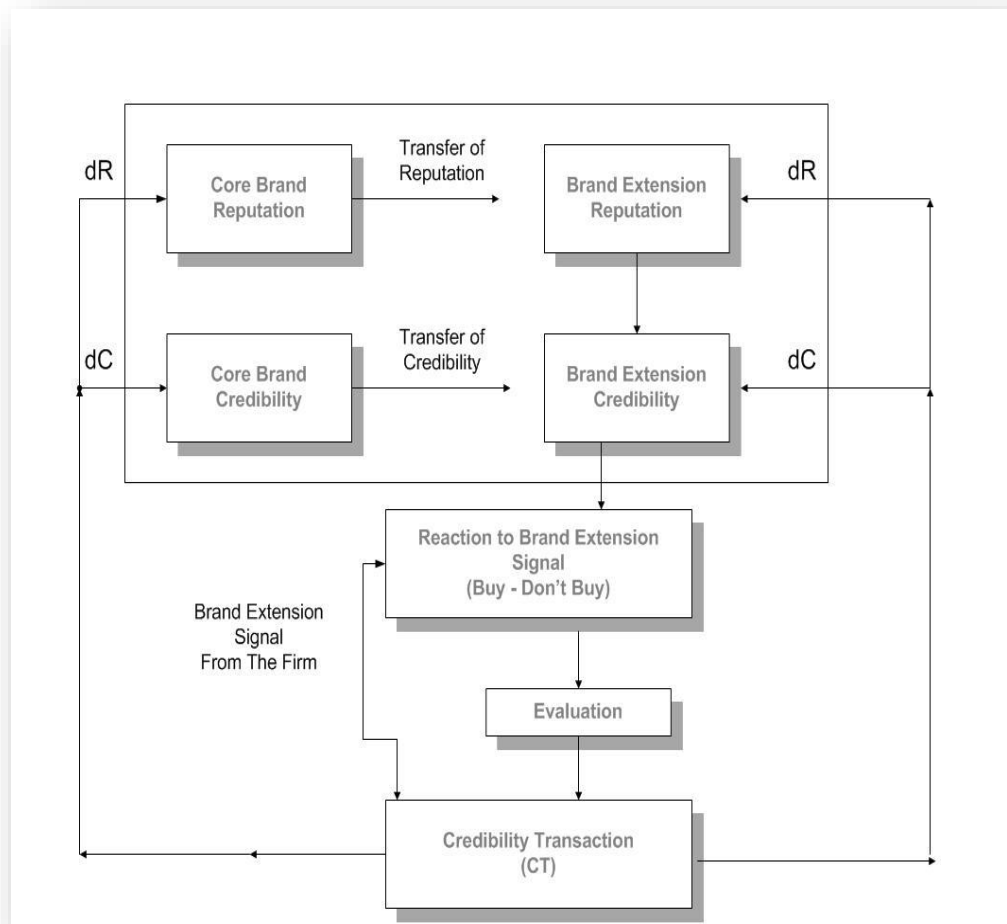


Figure 7: Evaluation model for brand extension by Milewicz and Herbig (1994)

- **Brand Genealogy**

Brand genealogy according to Holt (2004) is that mindset in brand management where brand managers study and unearth the history of brands. A cultural approach explains the significance of product or service brands in the mainstream cultures.

- **Brand Icon**

In the recent years, mainstream urban and rural culture has been heavily influenced by several brands, ranging from fashion, sports to food industry. Companies that have understood their brand architecture and essence, while conducting brand extensions after properly evaluating its equity. As a result, valuable brands evolve into icons, or in other words “Iconic brands”. In most cases, many iconic brands have become integral parts of lifestyle. The Interbrand Group (2006) explains this significance with the examples of Harley Davidson and Nike that have permanently positioned themselves in the conscious and sub-conscious minds of people. This is the reason why most companies treat their brand icons as invaluable assets.

- **Brand Identity**

As the name suggests, it is the identity of a brand. Some often confuse brand identity with brand image but technically they hold different meaning. A brand image which is basically the perception of customers about a brand, where as brand identity truly marks how firm wants its brand to be in the eyes and minds of the consumers. This includes communication, the selection of logo, brand name and all the constituents of a brand. Jean-Noel Kapferer (1992) with his Brand Identity Prism assess the weak and strong points of any brand in six aspects, namely physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection and self-image. And these six aspects of the brand identity prism are only useful if the company succeeds in making the brand communicate with its users and potential consumers. According to Jean-Noel Kapferer (2004), strong and iconic brands successfully merge all these six aspects effectively to form an attractive brand identity. Figure 8. Shows the Kepferer Brand Identity Prism.

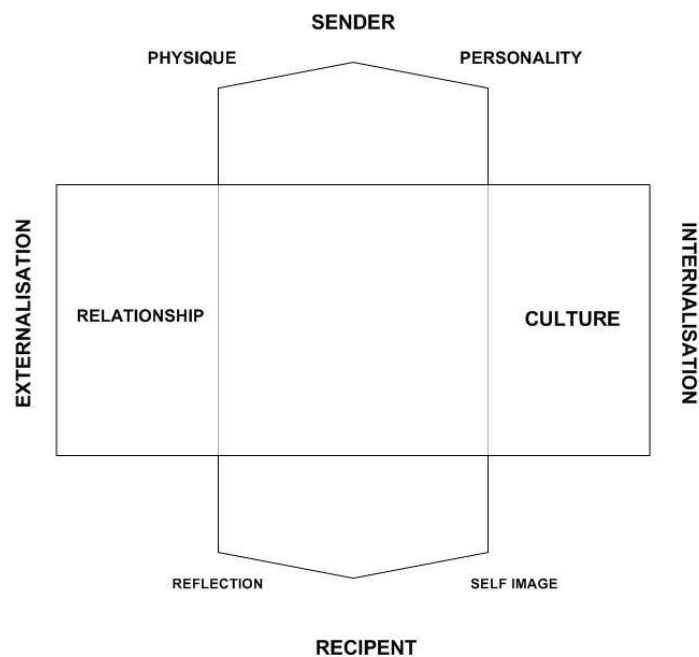


Figure 8: Kepferer Brand Identity Prism (Kepferer, 1997)

- **Brand Image**

Brand image is the image perception of consumers about the brand. Often confused with brand identity, brand image is a creation of brand identity that a firm itself works to create in the minds of the consumers about the brand(s). The significance of a brand image can never be neglected in brand management, as ignorance to such a key aspect can negatively influence the companies strategically constructed goals and objectives. And as already mentioned several times, this all is dependent on how well the product or corporate brand interacts with its consumers. According to Tony Jacowski (2009) the consumer perception is produced on all those occasions where a company interacts with the public. This can come from stores, weekly news bulletins, employees and all related interfaces.

- **Brand Loyalty**

Successful businesses have one thing in common, that is the loyalty they have from their customers. It is such an important aspect of brand management that Tilde Heding et. al, (2008) portrays it as an important objective of the branding process since costs associated with drawing and building new customers are quite higher than holding onto existing ones. But building this loyalty is a demanding process. It does not matter what sort of a product a business makes or delivers, what is important is whether the company is able to give the consumers a satisfying emotional experience. One simple example of delivering this emotional experience is the ability of employees to meet and surpass consumers' expectations. What do such actions create in return? Customers feel more satisfied and consider the company more reliable eventually building a positive relation. Many organizations today take the best out of brand loyalty in situations when the customer is least satisfied, or in other words not happy. Acknowledging such customers by taking notice of their issues and promptly meeting them strengthens brand loyalty.

- **Brand Personality**

A brand has a personality or a set of personalities like living things; this is every consumer's mindset. To support this concept, Jennifer L. Akker (1997) explains brand personality as a collection of human characteristics and features that are linked to brands. Business experts have placed brand personality among the mandatory aspects of any brand development and management process, yet it is often neglected by firms. Considering the launch of a new logo as a brand in its own is a cardinal sin in branding often committed by many. Concentrating on one aspect, while ignoring all other important aspects that constitute a brand's personality results into nothing but failed branding campaigns.

- **Brand Portfolio**

Companies own a single or a number of brands, the range of these brands in a company define their brand portfolio. Management of brand portfolio in a certain business arena is directly influenced by the level of understanding brand managers have over brand architecture. According to Tanya Robertson (2000) companies

operating under several brands, a brand portfolio is a collection of all these brands under one umbrella. For example The Coca Cola Company does not only make and sell the CocaCola Drink but over one hundred carbonated, fruit and flavored drinks that either fully or partially owned by the Coca Cola Company.

The next section of this chapter discusses how the scientific discipline of brand management has developed in the past few decades.

3.2. Evolution of Brand Management

In the discipline of marketing research, the area of brand management has been identified with the help of seven main approaches so far, between the year 1985 and 2006. These approaches are:

1. The Economic approach
2. The Identity approach
3. The Consumer based approach
4. The Personality approach
5. The Relational approach
6. The Community approach
7. The Cultural approach

The essence of these approaches portray the evolution of this scientific discipline (brand management) and how the focus of organizations turned from the sending end, going through the phases where the emphasis was towards the receiver end, and then reaching to the understanding of cultures, demographics and geographies in reference to brands. Shifting of paradigms of these seven approaches through periods of time will be discussed in sequential order in this chapter.

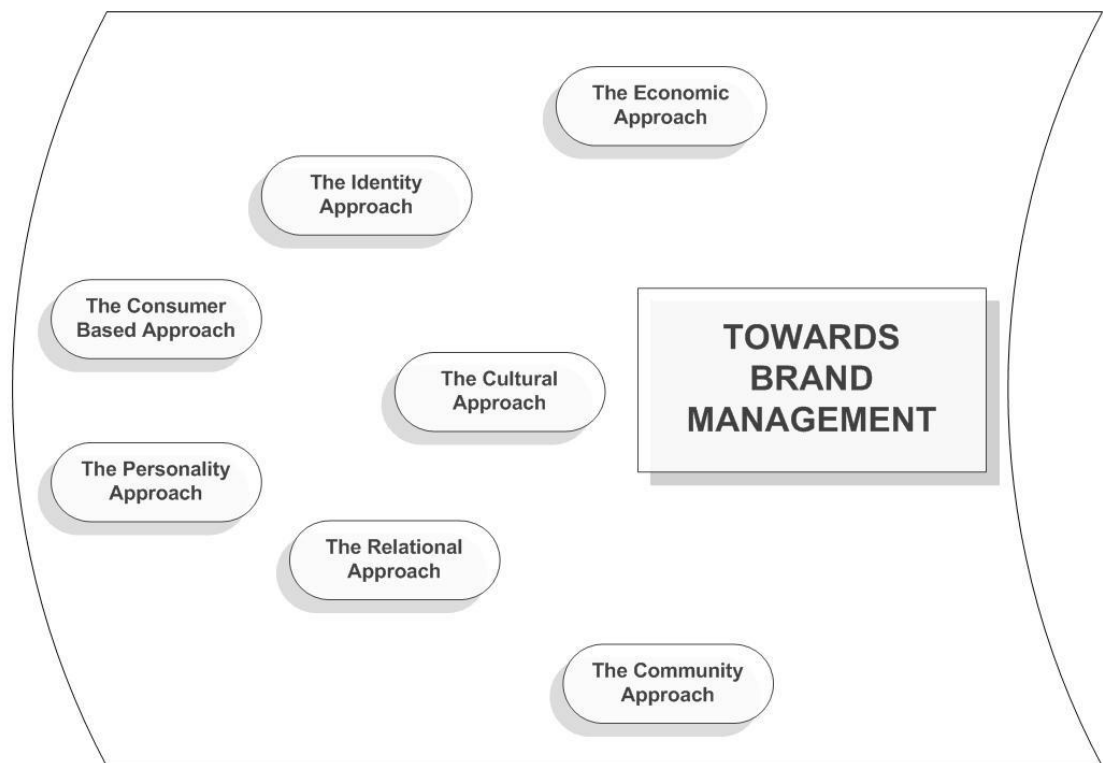


Figure 9: Brand Management Approaches during 1985 – 2006

3.2.1. The Economic Approach

Often confused with marketing, brand management is a vast discipline that is normally considered a breakaway subject from marketing. Brand management requires extreme research and all branding processes start with the conventional process of finding the marketing mix, the four Ps process. Brand value is closely examined with respect to factors such as price changes, promotional activities and channels of distribution. The perspective clearly revolves around the economic view. The customers form their decisions on tangible and rational considerations and transactions (Tilde Heding et. al, 2008). This was and still considered the era where the focus was on the sending end that is the firm, so brand managers and marketers controlled the brand value creation process that was propagated to the receiver end (consumers).

3.2.2. The Identity Approach

According to the identity approach, the brand is associated with organization's identity. Though this approach surfaced during the early years of brand management evolution, in

modern times the notion of organization/corporate branding still holds great significance. This perspective is often seen in the European business areas where a brand is considered as an entity owned and controlled by the marketer. The marketer is responsible for brand value creation according to this approach (Tilde Heding et. al, 2008). It is pivotal for the brand to be integrated throughout the organization.

The first two approaches developed, surfaced and remained major school of thoughts during the 1985 – 1993 era.

As discussed previously, the initial part of the time period (between 1985 and 2006) focused on the sender's end, after that, especially the time between 1993 and 1999 noticed a shift towards the receiver's end. This era emphasized on subjects of human psychology and communication to look at brand management. In simple terms, the perspective of consumers was adapted; this gave birth to the following approaches.

3.2.3. The Consumer Based Approach

Kevin Lane Keller in 1993 put forward an approach that shifted the focus completely away from the previous perspectives where the emphasis was primarily on the sender's end communication. According to Keller (1993), brand knowledge has a differential effect on the consumers react or respond to a marketed brand. Keller defines differential effect as the comparison of human response towards marketing with that of a response towards a similar marketing of a fictitious product. Where brand knowledge consists of the brand's image and awareness, while the consumer's response to the marketing of a brand is the response to a marketing mix experienced by the consumer. A brand will have a positive or a negative customer based brand equity depending whether consumers respond more or less to the marketing mix (Keller, 1993).

3.2.4. The Personality Approach

This approach looks at a brand as a human like character. This approach was first put forwarded during the year 1997 that set a new standard in the discipline of brand management. The research study explained how consumers would relate a brand with human like characteristics and personalities. It basically has roots in human psychology and that is why a brand is perceived as a human like entity with a personality, laying foundation for the next approach known as the relational approach.

3.2.5. The Relational Approach

According to this approach, a brand is considered a viable and workable partner by the consumers. This approach is constructed on the same core as the personality approach, and that is why this shift manifests a paradigm shift from the earlier approaches of the era. And studies clearly indicate this relationship created by consumers with brands. According to Tilde Heding et. al, (2008) brand relationship is a result of phenomenological study, both philosophical as well as scientific aspects of phenomenology are added to the discipline of brand management.

3.2.6. The Community Approach

The time from 2000 till 2006 marked the addition two new approaches in the area of brand management, the first being the community approach. Consumer empowerment, socio-cultural influences and anthropological studies contributed to the community approach (Tilde Heding et. al, 2008). In the early approaches the study focused on the interactions between the marketers and individual customers. According to this approach, consumers are focused as brand communities, with the brand concept having double but harmonized notion of social brand perspective and brand consumer exchange. Social benefits that can result from a brand would ultimately lead brand loyalty. The portrayal of a brand community will then benefit marketers by enabling them to understand better meaning of the brand from the study of the brand community.

3.2.7. The Cultural Approach

A brand is considered cultural product in this approach to brand management. Brand management is studied in light of the influences one takes from a culture. Culture is a powerful phenomenon with strong forces, according to this approach such forces in a society play a significant role in building a brand icon. It is a cultural brand perspective in which a brand is an integral part as well as influencer of the mainstream culture. McDonalds, KFC, Starbucks, WalMart are few of the iconic brands that can be considered best examples of cultural brands. Holt (2004) explains the cultural approach to brand management as the brand being a cultural artefact that moves through the history.

All seven approaches follow a certain frame work as illustrated in Figure 10. The ground is based on mere assumptions that lead to research and study resulting into theory, which stimulates the need for methods of adequate data collection before they are implied by managers in a business or an organization for brand management.

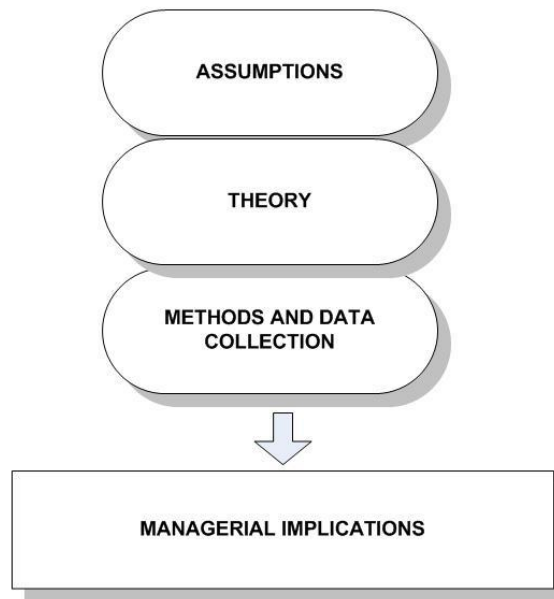


Figure 10: Framework of Approach (Tilde Heding et. al, 2008)

3.3. Building Strong Brands

The previous two sections of the chapter thoroughly explained the key constituents of brand management and seven approaches that have built the scientific discipline of brand management. This section discusses how an organization can endeavor to build a strong, sustainable brand. This is explained with the help of Kevin Keller ten-point plan in table 1.

Table 1: Kevin Keller’s Ten-Point Plan to building strong brands (Source: Gupta et. al, 2010)

1	Brand excels consumers’ expectations	Initially it is a complex process to understand customer needs. Pinpointing unique and explicit needs is difficult, a method to learn these needs is with the help of <i>affinity diagrams</i> and then using the consumer responses different groups with similar needs are made. But even with the help of this method, brand managers can’t completely unearth consumer needs. The consumer needs regarding benefits can
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		be categorized into three main groups; 1.Dissatisfiers: Consumer not reacting or acknowledging a certain benefit present in the brand. 2. Satisfiers: a certain benefit is expected to be a part of the transaction by the consumers. 3. Delighters: Customer is delighted when a benefit beyond consumer's expectation is provided.
2	Brand remains relevant	Brand, just like a product has a life cycle and goes through three main stages; 1. Introduction: Establishing the brand image and/or position. 2. Elaboration: Enhancing the brand image to attain superiority. 3. Fortification: Image extension of the brand to other products with the same brand name. Brand relevance is achieved with the help of revitalization strategies such as exploring new markets, image changes, and increased usage.
3	Pricing strategy to match perceived value	In order to complete this point, a brand must always deliver value for money to consumers.
4	Brand Positioning	To survive and succeed in a hot business arena, the brand should be properly positioned in a market with respect to its competitors. This becomes a difficult task if the product brand fails to differentiate itself in the saturated market segments. Proper positioning becomes easy if the brand has a plus point such as quality certifications.
5	Brand Consistency	Brands have inner cores and outer cores. The inner core is the heart and soul of any brand. Outer core may change depending on the business needs and other situations, but the inner core (brand identity) should never be allowed to change or get damaged with time. It should always been consistent.
6	Sensible Brand Portfolio & hierarchy	Organizations often own a range of brands, defined as brand portfolio. The brand portfolio should have an optimum number because it strengthens the firm's image and benefits its reputation. Too many portfolios risk encroachment of the brand name itself.
7	Brand take full advantage and coordinates a full	Aggressive promotion and advertising can help change a brand image into brand equity. Firms that are able develop a good image and promote it, always win.

	repertoire of marketing activities	
8	Brand managers understand the meaning of a brand to consumers	Features and benefits are always important in a brand, but the company should always understand that they also need to provide value, personality, culture and satisfaction through their brand.
9	Continued Brand Support	A brand should be supported at all stages, especially the initial stages when the profits have not yet surfaced because during those stages of a commodity product becoming a brand, it needs to be supported by good finances. The initial year for a brand is normally a loss, but as the fruits reap and a brand surfaces, it generates profits for the company. The company should support the brand at all times and situations, otherwise it will risk abandonment.
10	Monitoring of sources of brand equity	Anything that makes brand equity is forever important for a brand and its company. All such assets should be looked after and protected at all times. The performance of a brand should always be monitored and tracked.

Branding and brand management if properly done can reap great fruits for businesses. If manufactures are able to develop an adequate branding strategy, they will be able to process and track their orders efficiently and effectively. Having a brand trademark is a legal protection, especially for products of unique nature. It is because of proper brand management that sellers are able to grow loyal buyers as a result of brand loyalty. Another great advantage of proper brand management is that it gives the company the ability to properly segment markets. Organizations, especially SMEs (and StartUps) that are yet to make a name can build a corporate image if they succeed in creating a strong brand that is accepted by consumers and distributors.

A strong brand guarantees high revenues, ultimately high profits for the company. With the help of proper brand management, companies can make the market difficult for new rivals, because a strong brand is an entry barrier for new market entrants.

The next chapter attempts to discuss some new branding strategies that might be used by SMEs in developing a brand strategy without heavily investing in the branding process.

4. Online & Novel Branding Strategies

Despite being one of the mandatory tasks, branding for many organizations especially SMEs has become a difficult task for many firms, primarily due to the high costs associated with brand management, development and lack of expertise to make an influence in saturated markets. Success of a brand has always been a result of proper positioning practices in order to develop practical brand positioning strategies.

Ries and Trout in 1981 defined the concept of positioning as

“An organized system for finding a window in the mind. It is based on the concept that communication can only take place at the right time and under the right circumstances.”

(Source: Ries and Trout 2003, 20th Annv.Edition)

Ries and Trout by “a window in the mind” refer to minds of the customers and a glimpse of that molds the future of any brand. The right time and scenario does not mean in reference to the company but basically focuses on the customer end. Understanding this helps companies realize, understand and implement the concept of creating not a mere product but a brand. Organizations that have focused on creating brands rather than products have in most cases sustained growth and succeeded competition, while firms failing to do so have not only lost their position but have diminished with time. The previous chapter discussed some key concepts in brand management and formed a guide line for developing strong brands, this chapter focuses on novel and online branding strategies as a potential for SMEs.

4.1. Online Branding Strategies

Similarly to the conventional branding strategies, online branding is simply the use of online resources for positioning a brand and its supplier in a business market. The objective similar to conventional branding strategies is to get noticed by relevant prospects and get into business with. Online branding has evolved tremendously in the recent years primarily due to the growing number of internet users around the globe and great developments in technology industry, making it available and affordable for the common man to own a piece of electronic which might not have been easy a couple of decades back.

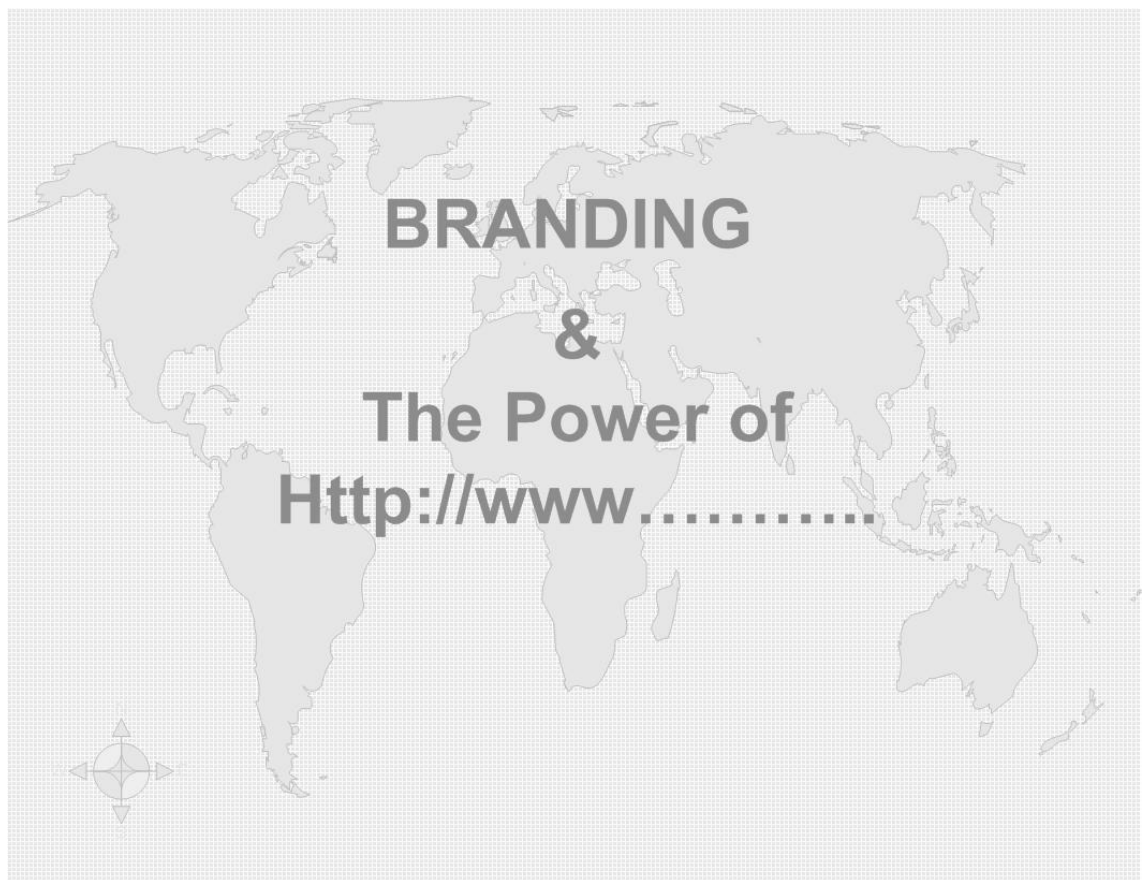


Figure 11: Power of Branding Online

The significance of online branding in today's fast paced and technologically advanced world cannot be ignored. It has shifted the power to the consumers from the marketers and organizations. And how can one ignore the simplest yet one of the most important benefits of online branding and that is to spread brand's word to audiences in the comfort of their homes and private surroundings. It does not only give the companies the chance to represent themselves as experts, but also the opportunities to acknowledge and solve issues of consumers in a market.

The number of internet users around the globe has increased tremendously during the past decade making it one of the most used technologies. With world population crossing the 7 Billion mark, the total number of internet users constitutes 39% of the total world population. Majority of the internet users are from developed countries who make about 77% of the total global internet users, while the remaining 33% of internet users are from developing countries. According to the International Telecommunications Union, only 16% of the global population used internet back in 2005, which was less than half of the current figure.

Table 2: Worldwide Internet Users (International Telecommunications Union-ITU)

	2005	2010	2013
Global Population	6.5 billion	6.9 billion	7.134 billion
Non-Internet Users	84%	70%	61%
Internet Users	16%	30%	39%
Users from Developing Countries	8%	21%	31%
Users from Developed Countries	51%	67%	77%

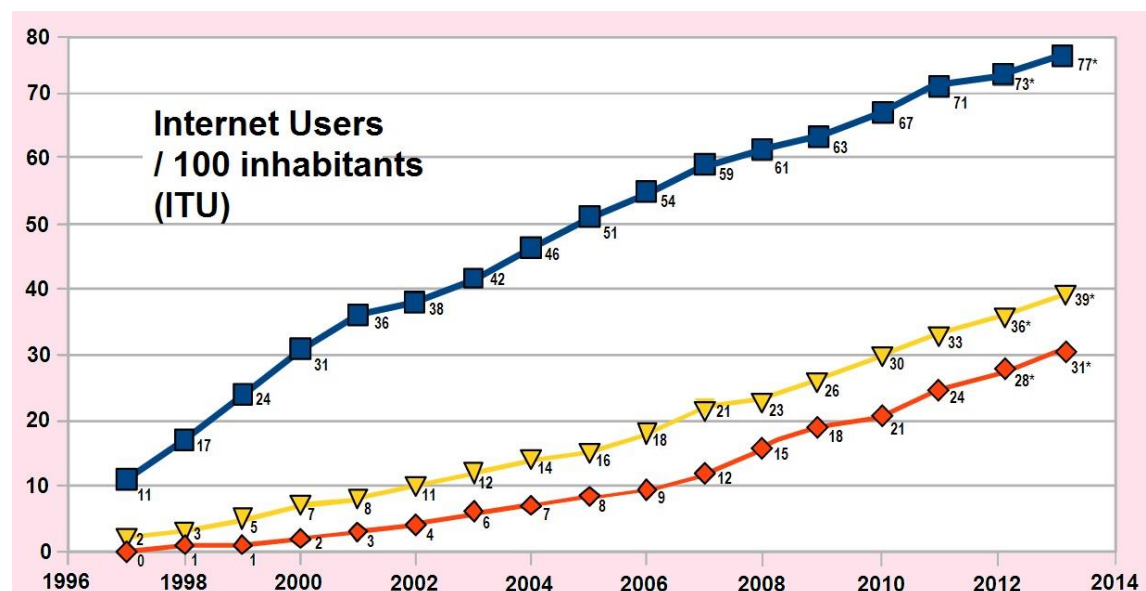
Table 3 illustrates how the internet users are scattered geographically, with most from Europe and Americas. The attention grabbing fact is the great increase in the number of internet users in the regions such as Africa, Asia and Arab States.

Table 3: Regional Internet Usage (ITU)

	2005	2010	2013
Africa	2%	10%	16%
Americas	36%	49%	61%
Arab States	8%	26%	38%
Asia and Pacific	9%	23%	32%

Commonwealth Independent States	10%	34	52%
Europe	46%	67%	75%

As discussed previously, the great increase in internet usage around world is majorly contributed by fast development in the technological industry, making it a fast spread phenomenon around the world; other major factors include outsourcing, especially to Asian countries, trade regulation ease and globalization. Because of the reasons discussed, internet today has become a great branding and marketing platform.



Legend



Figure 12: Internet Users per 100 Inhabitants (Source: ITU)

Business experts consider OB as a process that if adequately done not only adds the aspect of “pre-condition” but couples it with “pre sells” to the relevant consumers, both in Business-to-Business (B2B) and Business-to-Consumer (B2C) categories. The benefit being, the company portrays itself as the best choice in front of the buyers in market. Eventually, this makes it easier for companies to convince the buyers on their demanded prices and conditions.

Change is inevitable in all aspects of life, technology to lifestyle, everything evolves. According to entrepreneur and branding professional Peter L. Getman, the way individuals interact with others and with brands today has changed, texting means talking today, brands give verbal meanings such as “Skype me”, “Google it”, “Tweet it”.

4.1.1. Blogs & Blogging

The simplest understanding of the word “Blog” is its derivation from “web log”; a webpage that contains some sort of information in date order. Normally, the order of the information is from the newest being at the top of the webpage. Daniel Harris (2008) defines a blog as a contraction for a weblog that surfaced especially in the mid 90s as an explosive and novel social media. Blog, similar to a journal at times will contain information in a proper order as one goes through it. What most blogs had and still have in common is that they contain links that can be clicked to reach certain information on other websites. The idea basically comes from the fact that if a blog makes a certain statement, it will traditionally justify that statement by mentioning a link that once clicked will take the reader to actual source behind the statement made, the information website to justify it. And the practice of actively keeping a blog with latest, relevant and premium quality information is called blogging. Blogging today has become a great branding strategy for all kinds organizations.

The benefit of creating and proactively maintaining a blog is its great influence on increasing the visibility of a business website in search engines, enables individuals and firms to develop expertise and form communities, lay base for brand trust while increasing followers in parallel. Though blogs merely started as social media platforms for expressing own thoughts, with time the concept has grown, matured and evolved into a better defined and concrete branding technique. Daniel Harris (2008) portrays this evolution of the concept of blog and blogging into a comprehensive and highly democratic channel for social communication. Writing a blog and maintaining it by adding articles to a blog is another way of defining blogging (Alex Newson et. al.). It was because of this evolution, business blogs came into existence and now majority of the blogs are about business and related subjects.

During the last one decade blogging not only became one of the most favorable options for spreading political agendas by several groups and organizations, but also influenced school of thoughts in the business industry. Blog advertisement and journalism today is competing with conventional tri media. Primarily because it became a more effective and efficient podium for readers; drawing active participants with its communicational capabilities. For SMEs and startups it has created a leveled ground with big advertisers and networks. There are several ways to categorize blogs with most directories based on subject matter such as business, arts, politics, sports, personal, health, academic and

technology to name a few. Most of these categories are further divided into numerous other sub categories. One such example is of the subject of Business and profession, there can be business blogs on start-ups, SMEs, global firms, Law and many others. Bloggers today with the aid of Blog Search Engines (BSE) can boost blogging by establishing own networks over the World Wide Web (WWW). BSE is a certain kind of web directory that categorizes only blog (blogging) websites. Mostly, BSEs are free of charge and are provided by the blog hosts. Every BSE like any other web platform has a dashboard with control and setting options such that one can use to index it. The benefit of indexing blogs is its capability to mark the blog in a public domain eventually listing it on all public blog lists and directories for users to view. There is not much difference between a web search engine (SE) and a BSE, with both having similar capabilities and ranking protocols, except for a BSE has its own optimization protocols and methods. Blogs are very focused, particularly on a single or relevant niche and that is the main reason why a blog should always have focused and premium quality content in order to get easily viewed and ranked by BSEs. Additionally, in blogs the use of key words is rather limited for Search Engine Optimization (SEO) reasons. SEO is simply the process for optimizing a website or a blog so that it gets high ranking in Search Engine (SE) results.

4.1.2. List Building

List building (LB) of emails has become a fundamental ingredient for success in these times. It allows businesses to keep proper and healthy communication with a strong database of subscribers. A business, whether newly setup or mature, should always understand the significance of building a list of emails in order to target current and potential customers while maintaining and building trust. But building a list is more than a catalog of emails belonging to individuals who have opted in, it requires its own planning and development. Anthony Pang (2011) describes list building as an independent subject that requires a proper strategy with the use of various channels to build a practical email list framework.

Many marketing and branding experts consider and ever growing email list as one of the most valuable assets for any company that focuses on branding itself, as it is a proven way to get known and achieve return on investments across the WWW. Coupling it with other online branding strategies such as SM and SEO, it functions to give the utmost effective results to any branding process.

The process starts with the collection of emails of those individuals who visit a website or a blog. The simplest way to get details of these visitors is by placing a form on the blog or the website. In addition to that, a list building software is used in order to keep a record of all the subscribers. There is the point where the use of an auto-responder becomes significant. It is very simple software that takes the manual work away from list building

by sending automatic emails or responses to emails that are sent to it. There are many auto-responders available, so finding one is not a complex task. For endeavors that include targeted consumers or permission based email listings, an auto-responder is a perfect tool to aid this process.

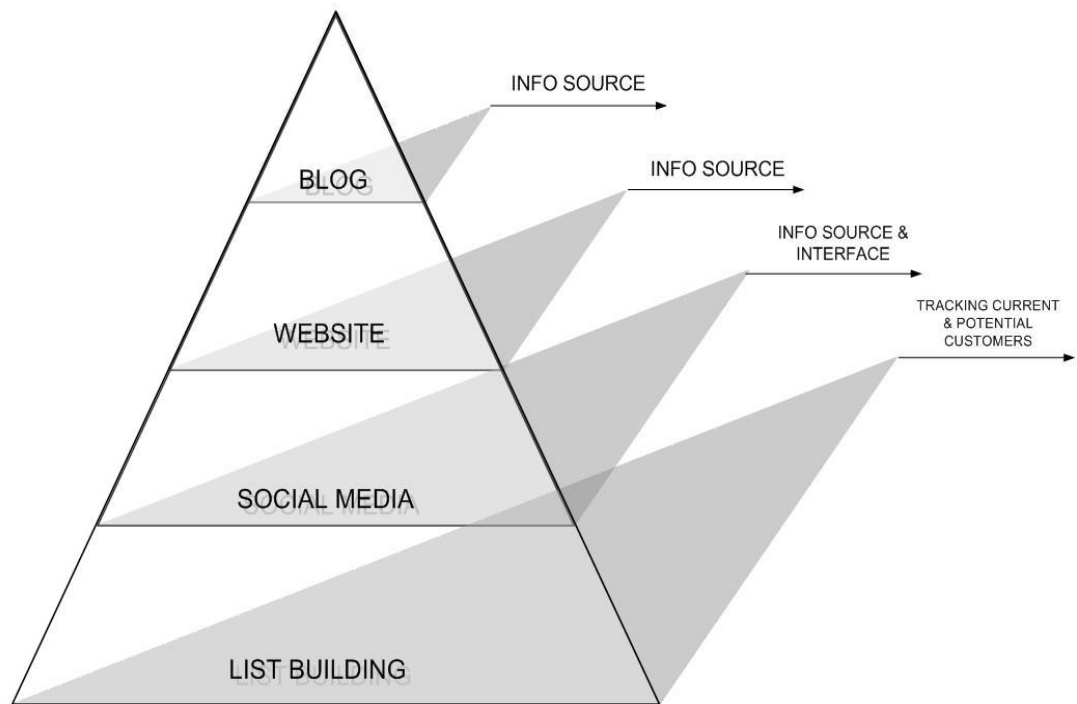


Figure 13: Illustration of List Building Aided By Other Online Branding Strategies

The key in list building is understanding that any subscriber who opts in for an email automatically becomes a potential customer for the business that has put up the form in their blog or website for branding or marketing purposes, but unfortunately many marketing and brand managers overlook such opportunities. It is pivotal to track and utilize all such opportunities. As discussed in the previous section, the blog must at all costs contain relevant and adequate information if one wishes to attract more visitors. Having the right information helps a blog by ranking it high in BSE and SE results. Subscribers should be offered a lot of free information that is relevant information in the emails. And especially when an individual or an organization has branding as their goal, the information needs to be in the exact same niche as the list one is building. This begins with identifying the market. The business should work towards attracting, inspiring and helping out their customers in the list through email communication, merely considering

it as a source towards current and potential leads totally ignores the basic concept of the branding process, that is of thinking from the consumers point of view.

4.1.3. Social Media Networks As A Branding Strategy

Social Media as everybody know today like a routine word actually started to get recognized in the early 2000s. Kaplan and Haenien (2010) define the term social media as

“a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.”

According to this definition, social media network is made up of different forms of internet based applications. The most common being blogs, weblogs, social blogs and networks, and forums. Many believe that social media is something new, though it rose to surface less than a decade ago, but it did exist in one form or the other long before the 2000s. But its actual popularity is credited to social media networks like Orkut, MySpace, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to name a few. Facebook for one has evolved into the greatest social media platform in the world today, according to the latest statistics issued by Statisticbrain.com, Facebook today has over 1 billion monthly active users, and over 600, 000, 000 mobile Facebook users.

Table 4: Facebook Statistics as of 1st January 2014 (Source:StatisticBrain.Com)

Statistics	Figures
Total number of monthly active Facebook users	1,310,000,000
Total number of mobile Facebook users	680,000,000
Increase in Facebook users from 2012 to 2013	22%
Total number of minutes spent on Facebook each month	640,000,000
Percent of all Facebook users who log on in any given day	48%
Average time spent on Facebook per visit	18 minutes

Total number of Facebook pages	54,200,000
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With the development in technology and affordability of communication devices, Facebook is growing at a fast pace, the recorded growth in the number of Facebook users between 2012 and 2013 was an astonishing 22%.

People belonging to almost all age groups having computer literacy use or know about internet these days, with majority belonging the age group of 18 to 34 years range. For most Facebook users today, logging on to their account and regularly updating has become a routine habit. People love to convey messages, share their experiences, share photos, visit personal and public pages, company pages and share all kinds of media on Facebook. Statistics issued by StatisticBrain.Com in Table 5 show the latest data as of 1st January 2014.

Table 5: Facebook Demographics as of 1st January, 2014 (Source: StatisticBrain.Com)

Demographics	Data
Percentage of 18 to 34 year olds checking FB as soon as they wake up	48%
Percentage of 18 to 34 year olds checking FB before they get out of bed	28%
Avg. friends per facebook profile	130
Avg. number of pages, groups, and events a user is connected to	80
Avg. number of photos uploaded each day	205
Fake Facebook profiles	81,000,000

The reason behind Facebook becoming such a globally accepted SM network is the way it is designed to out-reach. Facebook can be accessed in over 60 different languages that is a result of hundreds and thousands of FB users who contributed with their lingual skills. Millions of apps are installed on FB everyday and thousands of websites are integrated with it. Facebook today has become a leading global organization with over four thousand employees assisting the company to generate huge revenues year after year. Due to its

global access, features such as personalized pages, video conferencing, instant and inbox messaging, News Feeds, following and privacy control, companies today regularly use FB through company pages to interact with their current and potential customers. Table 6 shows the latest platform and company statistics of FB as of 1st January, 2014. With advertising as its major source of income, aided with global access and remarkable features, FB today has become one of the best forms of SM for branding.

Table 6: Platform and Company Statistics as of 1st January, 2014 (Source: StatisticBrain.Com)

Global Reach Stats.	Data
Languages FB available in	70
Percentage of Facebook users outside USA	75%
Facebook users who helped translate	300,000
Platform Statistics	Data
Avg. number of aps installed every day	20 million
Applications and websites integrated with FB	7 million
Every 20 minutes	Data
Links shared	1 million
Friends requests sent	2 million
Messages sent	3 million
Company Stats	Data
Facebook employees	4,619
Facebook revenue in 2012	\$5,090,000,000
Facebook revenue in 2013	\$6,150,000,000

B2C and B2B businesses today consider social media as a mandatory part of their branding, marketing and sales processes. According to Bernoff and Li (2009, 11) more than 1200 technological industry related organizations in Europe and the North America

have adopted the use of social media platforms in their routine business. According to the surveys conducted by Herder (2009), 82% of the businesses and individuals use social media for brand building while the rest for networking, customer service and for sharing work material and information as shown in Figure 14.

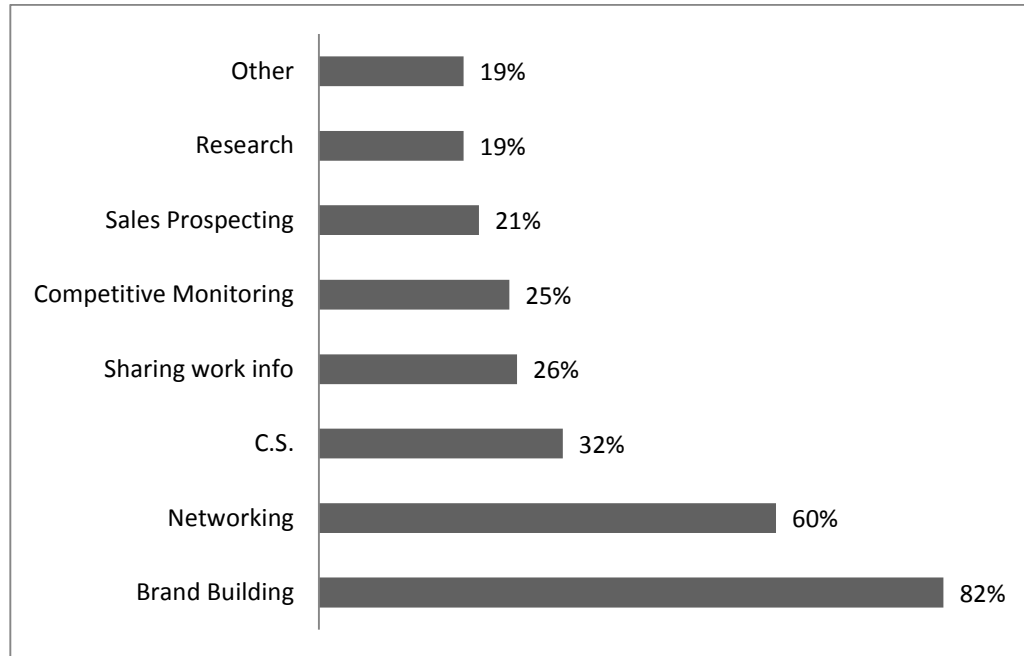


Figure 14: Entities' Reasons for Using Social Media (Source: Herder, 2009)

A company cannot simply use SM networks to interact with their customers without a proper strategy. Initiating a campaign on a SM network is often free, but in order to make it work on the long run does require resources. Brand building using SM network strategy is no different than any conventional branding strategy when it comes to aligning the actual action plan of the business with SM network branding strategy. And this can be achieved by emphasizing on the goal of strengthening each other to enter a market with competitiveness. The strategy should not be treated as a mere campaign, but as a commitment with focus on short term, as well as long term understanding of technology change (Jeffrey Hayzlett, Source: deHaaff, 2010).

Bernoff and Li (2009) devised the POST-method which is basically a four step plan for building a SM campaign.

P-People: Understanding how people are engaging on the internet.

O-Objective: Have a clear insight of own objective on SM, understanding consumer insights, improving initiatives and motivating others about the brand.

S-Strategy: Understanding what difference SM make in your effort after the campaign has completed.

T-Technology: Learning about the tools that can aid the process, and which tools the company can afford to implement.

Basically the essence of this approach is to adapt a course of action that is not only appropriate for the business, but also for the customers.

4.1.4. Banner Advertisement

Over the WWW, advertisements (ADs/AD) of all kinds are found in abundance, and one of the oldest and successful ways to advertise online is the use of banner ads. The most conventional banner ads are rectangular Ads normally seen on the top, bottom, left or right side of a website. These spaces or Ads are clickable links which can direct the user to the source website for further and complete information. Today businesses, whether they are online or offline, rely on the internet for branding, marketing and promotion purposes due to internet's global reach. E Jansen (2003) describes a banner ad as an ad on a website that connects a user to another website when clicked and is one of the most common components of advertising on the WWW.

Generally there are Static banner ads, Flash banners, Animated banners. The names of the different kinds of banner Ads are quite self explanatory, and do require a certain knowledge if they are to be used. Figure 15 illustrates common banner advertisements found on web-pages.

The screenshot displays the Banners Broker affiliate dashboard. The top navigation bar includes links for Dashboard, Account, Team, Purchase, Campaigns, Manage Inventory, Traffic Bank, E-Wallet, and Help. The left sidebar contains links for Submit Testimonial, What's new in V2.9.3, Message Inbox, Webinar Schedules, News Archives, Presentations, Recorded Webinars, and Feedback & Comments. The main content area features a 'Welcome Hassan' message with a referral link, a 'Join the mobile revolution with Banners Mobile' banner, and a row of icons for BB Contest Winner, BB V3 Video, Webinars, BB Blog, Credit Card, Twitter Feed, and Affiliate Manual. Below this is a '1615 Tickets Completed' bar. The 'News Board' section lists several news items: 'Payment Processors for US citizens', 'Banners Broker Holiday Schedule', 'STP payout completed', and 'Indian Bank withdrawal reversal'. Each news item includes a date, time, and a 'Read More' button. A 'Create MY BANNERS' button is visible in the bottom left corner.

Figure 15: Examples of Banner Ads (Source: Affiliate Dashboard. Hassan Aman)

Banner advertising aids marketers to enhance the visibility of their brands in an interactive manner by helping them grab the attention of internet surfers. Use of banner advertising effectively and efficiently improves the brand image in any targeted business market. And one cannot ignore the significance of a BI in maintaining good BE. This is because of the widely scattered banner ads reflecting brands over the WWW. This not only helps in developing a strong perception about the brand in existing customers, but also influences potential customers by introducing them to an unfamiliar brand. Banner advertising is also efficient in influencing users by diverting their focus from an existing similar brand towards a new one. Banner ADs create a presence that is quickly noticed by users (Patricia Howitt, 2006). Existing similar brands are those which either offer similar features like the new brand or accommodate the same market. And this process is made convenient with the use banner ADs. Banner ADs improve the awareness about a brand in a target market. This can be done with the help of a well-known online ADs company that is able to target markets according to the client's need and by providing sufficient responses and

clicks to campaign. And this can be a great branding approach especially for SMEs that want their presence to be felt and recognized in business markets.

Countries are spending billions on online advertisement every year, and as discussed previously Banner ADs is the most used way of advertising online. North America spends the most online advertising but other regions are also contributing to the online advertisement market and this is due to companies that are allocating large budgets for their marketing and branding tasks. Table 7 and Figure 16 show how much different regions have been spending on online ADs during the recent years.

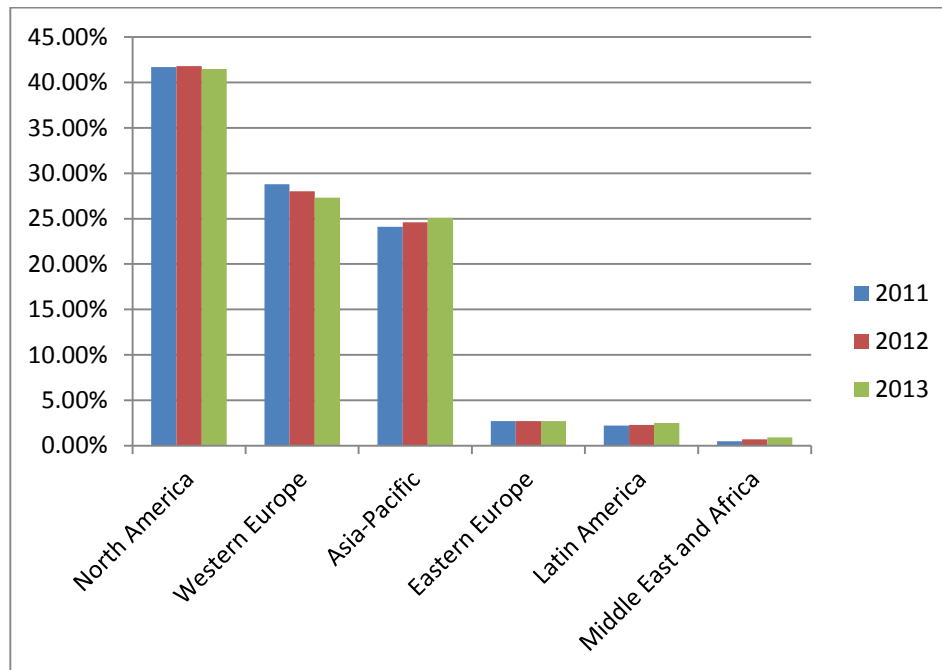


Figure 7.

Table 7: Online Spending Stats (Extended from Infographic, Go-Gulf.com)

Region	2011	2012	2013
North America	41.70%	41.80%	41.50%
Western Europe	28.80%	28.00%	27.30%
Asia-Pacific	24.10%	24.60%	25.10%
Eastern Europe	2.70%	2.70%	2.70%
Latin America	2.20%	2.30%	2.50%
Mid East & Africa	0.50%	0.70%	0.90%

United States is the largest user, client and provider of online advertising and has experienced great growth in online advertisement spending during the recent years. Businesses of all kind and size, whether they are B2B or B2C have moved towards this discipline for marketing, branding and promotional endeavors. US spends billions of dollars every year on online advertising campaigns, Table 8 and Figure 17 illustrate the situation of online advertisement spending (in billions) during the recent years and a projection of the coming years.

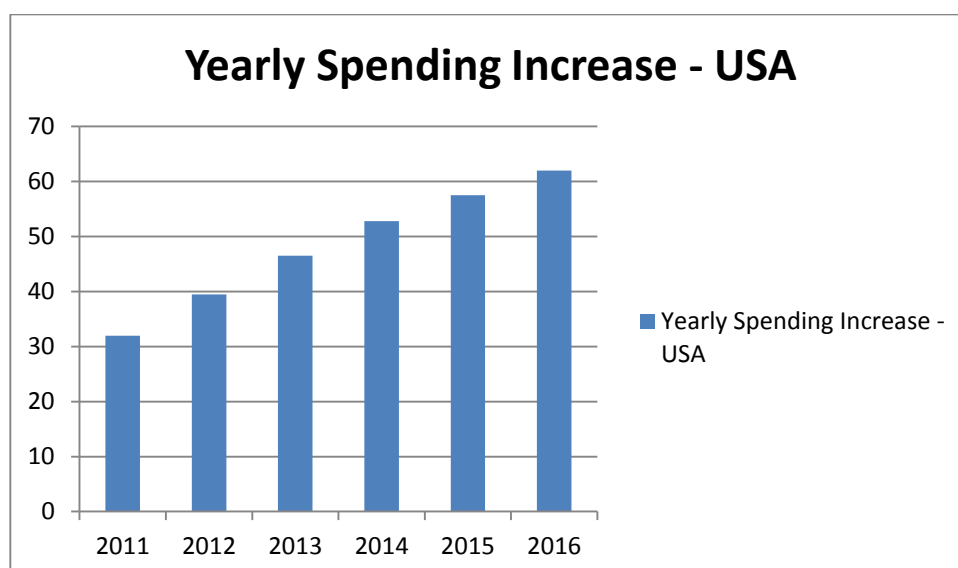


Figure 17: Online Advertisement Spending (In Billions), Previous & Projected (Extended from Inforgraphic, Go-Gulf.com)

Table 8: Spending Statistics (Previous & Projected – USA)

Year	Spending (in Billions)	Growth %age
2011	32	23.00%
2012	39.5	23.30%
2013	46.5	17.70%
2014	52.8	13.50%
2015	57.5	8.90%
2016	62	7.80%

While the use of online advertising kept on increasing, print media experienced downfall in certain regions, while in countries such as the US, the annual spending did not experience any growth over the years, especially after the boom of the online platforms.

Primarily due to organizations turning towards the WWW as a more reliable branding and marketing platform along with television and other electronic media.

Below in Figure 18 and Table 9 are the statistics of other high spending (online advertisement-in billions) countries in comparison to the US.

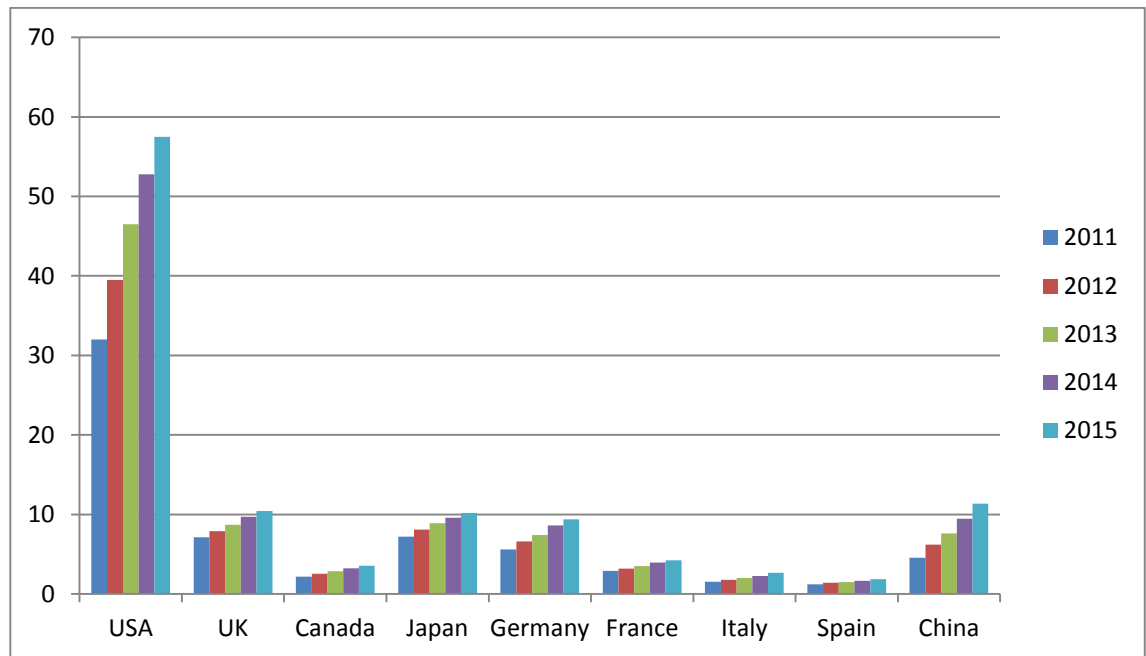


Figure 18: Countries With Most Spending (Billions) in Online Advertisement (Extended from Infographic, Go-Gulf.com)

Table 9: Statistics of Countries Spending (Billions) the Most in Online Ads ((Extended from Infographic, Go-Gulf.com)

Countries	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
USA	32	39.5	46.5	52.8	57.5
UK	7.13	7.91	8.7	9.7	10.43
Canada	2.16	2.54	2.86	3.23	3.56
Japan	7.21	8.1	8.91	9.58	10.17
Germany	5.61	6.59	7.42	8.62	9.37
France	2.88	3.2	3.5	3.95	4.22
Italy	1.52	1.78	2.01	2.27	2.64
Spain	1.2	1.41	1.48	1.67	1.84
China	4.57	6.21	7.63	9.46	11.36

Another factor that contributes to popularity and immense usage of banner ADs for branding and promotional purposes is its affordability compared to print or television advertisements. Banner ADs don't only bring unique visitors to a website but also help improve the ranking of a website in a search engine result such as Google, Yahoo or Bing.

It provides them the means to reach target audiences and makes it convenient for organizations, especially SMEs to brand with profitability. Additionally, it helps the companies to reach market segments significantly quicker than other conventional branding and marketing strategies and techniques. As a result, building a trust worthy image, and carving a permanent BI in the minds of the consumers. As discussed previously in this chapter, the WWW has a reach which is not only extensive, but wider than any physical or geographical barrier that can support the building of a large consumer base for companies.

4.1.5. Affiliate Marketing (Referral Schemes) for Branding

Affiliate marketing (AM) or referral schemes are something which can get a bit tricky for many business owners to define. Generally, these are marketing programs whereby individuals or business owners having a website are given commissions or rewards for promoting a product or a brand. Many E-businesses, especially the ones with a transactional element have benefited from AM. It is performance based marketing in which the person (affiliate) makes use of automated tools and specific software to bring visitors, consumers or sales to business website or a sales page with his/her own marketing endeavors and gets rewarded (Bruce C. Brown, 2009). Generally, an affiliate can be in AM with respect to his/her business objective.

- ⇒ Creating an affiliate program on own website for others to join in order to build an affiliate network to promote and sell a product or service using the website. Individuals or technically called the “affiliates” further promote and makes sales in order to earn commissions of every sale they make, resulting into enhanced promotion and sales. This category is generally considered the best option for individuals as well as businesses that have a product/service to promote and sell. And the easiest way to advertise a product across the WWW for free.
- ⇒ The other category is to simply join an existing affiliate program or network and use your own website to promote and sell the affiliate network’s product offerings to earn commissions of every closed sale. The logic of this system is very simple, you pay nothing to earn something, all that is required is to keep updated information and content about the product or service on your website.

Though the two types of affiliate marketing may sound easy, but without proper knowledge and strategy, it is very difficult for the venture to be a successful one. Anyone can create a website and put banner advertisements on it in hope of getting them clicked and lead to a sale but in reality it is not that easy, unless it is properly promoted and this comes learning about the technical limitations of AM and properly showcasing the products or services. The affiliate program should at all costs be effectively systematized and administered.

The focus is primarily on the first type of affiliate marketing, that is creating own website and providing an affiliate program for others to join and sell your product. In such a system, the sales on own website are less compared to those high traffic websites which the affiliates use to promote and sell the affiliate program's product offerings. The commissions paid are relatively very small compared to revenues generated from the high number of sales. This not only helps in building the business financially, but also aids the branding process for the company by building the BI. Businesses or firms with little budgets and marketing plans and lack of technical expertise can benefit a great deal using AM (Bruce C. Brown, 2009). There are certain pre-requisites for AM, it is to have basic knowledge of certain variables and steps that are involved in affiliate networks. Figure 19 illustrates the basic steps and variables in AM.

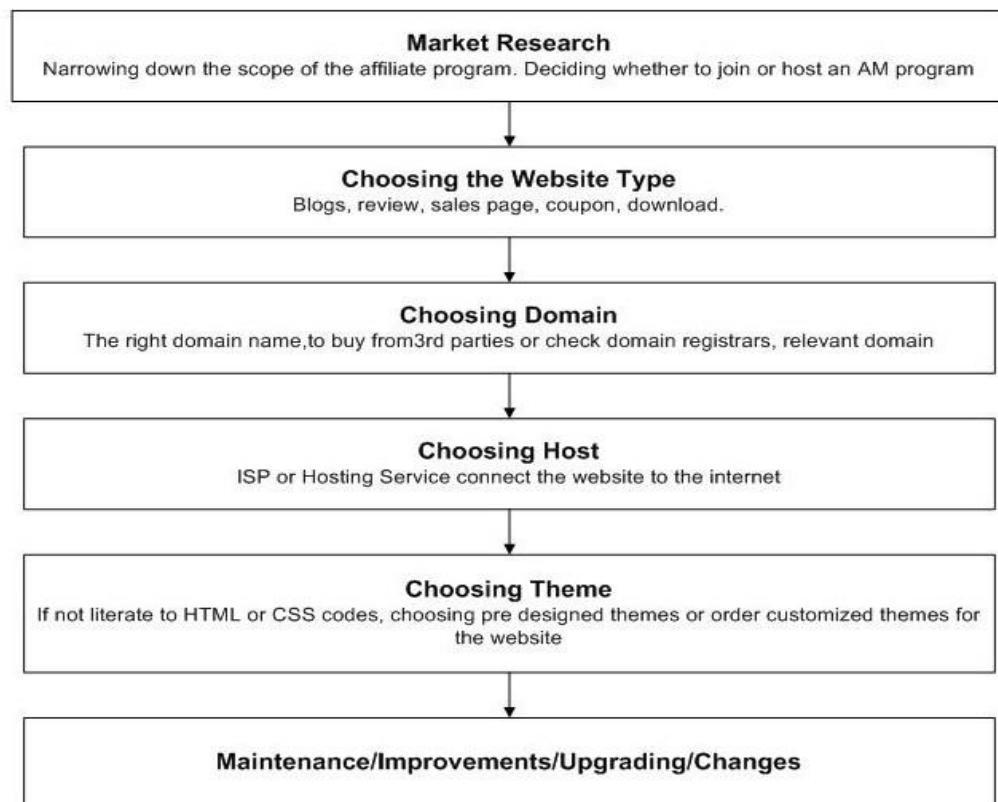


Figure 19: Basic Steps and Variables in Affiliate Marketing (Extended from Bruce C. Brown, 2009)

Depending on the way people earn money in AM, there can be three main categories.

Unattached Affiliate Marketing This type of AM is commonly known as Pay Per Click (PPC) AM, where the affiliate/user does not really have any control, authority nor attendance in the niche. And the affiliate/user is paid on every click they generate, or a sale they close. Practically, there is no defined link or

connection between the marketer and the customer. All what the affiliate/marketer does is works to bring others to see the affiliate link with the help of software such as Facebook ads, Google Adwords to make users click on the link, view the product and purchase it. This in return qualifies the affiliate to earn a commission. Many individuals find this type a good option because they can join and earn from it despite not having any niche presence or authority. But for some it is not an attractive option, it can generate income but not really a business model which one can use build strong relations with the consumers as the affiliate only works as a middle man by promoting a link without any contact with the customers.

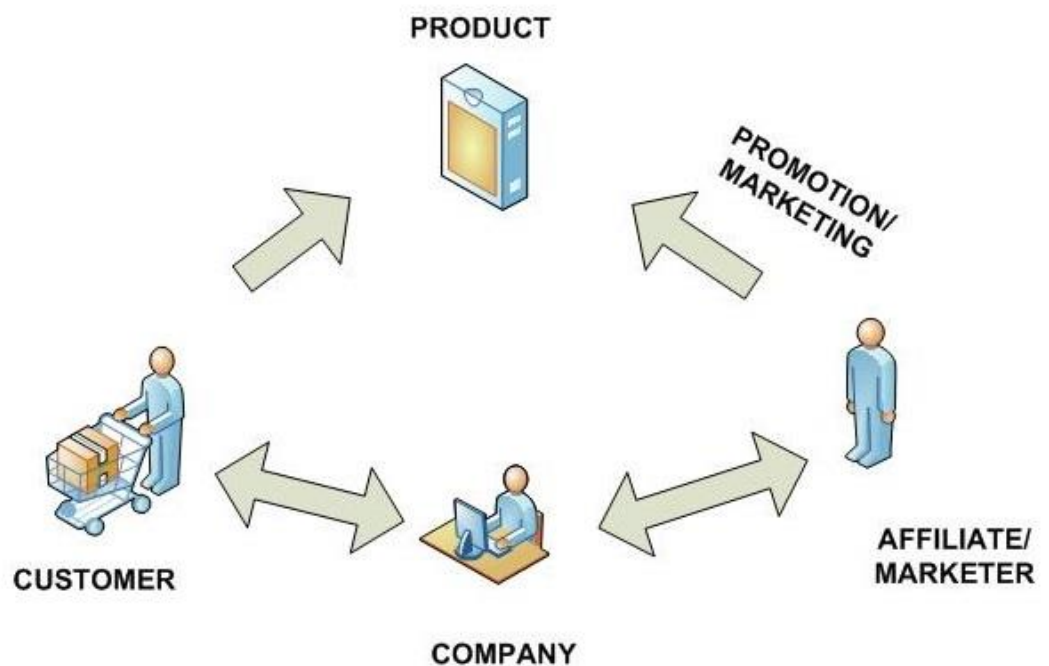


Figure 20: Illustration of Unattached AM

Related Affiliate Marketing For this type of marketing some presence on the WWW is mandatory. Now this presence can come from Social Media, Blogs or other forms of online promotion strategies, and the affiliate/user promotes links to products that are relevant to his/her niche. The affiliate/user promoting the product does not actually use the product in this type of AM. For example, individuals with their own personal blogs in a certain niche have various links on their page, links that are relevant to the blog. And it is not necessary that the person who puts the links on his/her blog would actually use the products. This is a great way to generate residual income by simply putting relevant affiliate links on a personal site, using banner ADs or text links, but not quite the option for someone with the objective of promoting and branding own products.

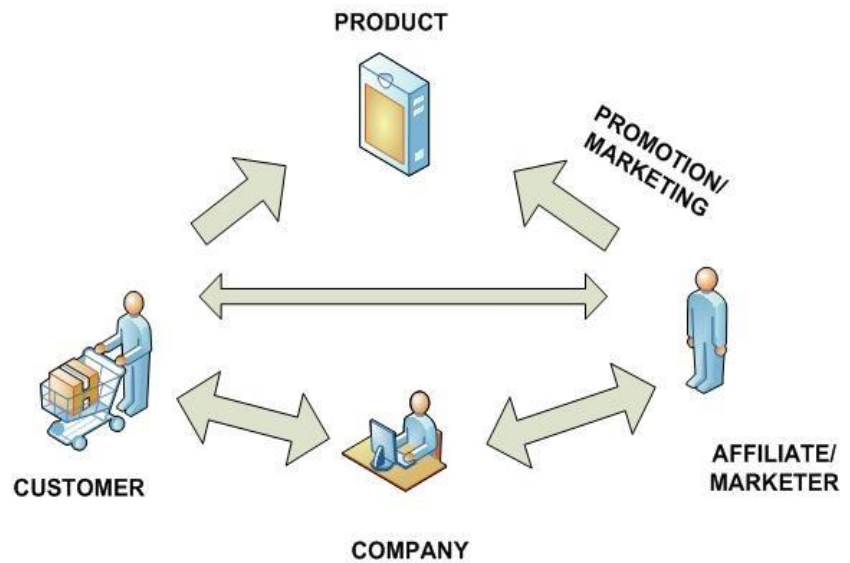


Figure 21: Illustration of Related AM

Involved Affiliate Marketing This type of AM requires the affiliate/marketer/user to have personally used the product or service and has completely faith in it so that he/she can recommend it personally to a target market. And the best way to achieve this is not by merely putting banner ADs or links but by highlighting the product in the main content of the website or the blog. This ultimately makes the product a more trusted proposition in front of potential customers.

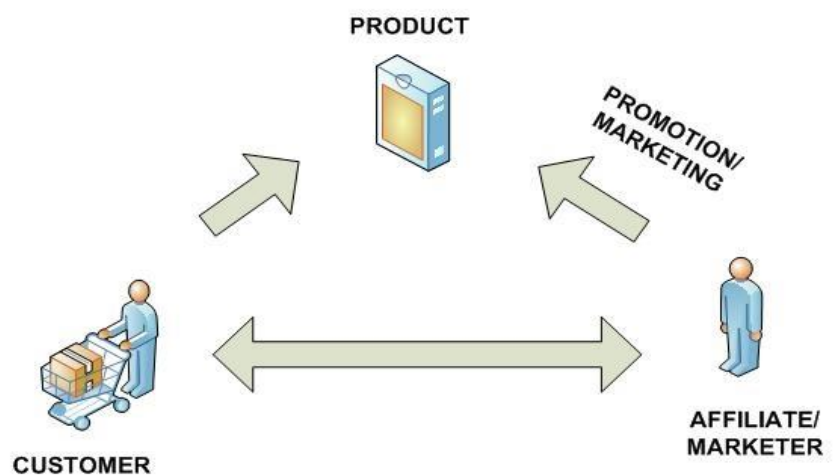


Figure 22: Illustration of Involved AM

It is the affiliates personal experience and involvement in the product that makes it a “have to have” option for others. But with this type of AM comes a certain level of responsibility which one should be ready for while recommending the product or service. There is a direction relationship between the affiliate/marketer and the end customer. This is the most serious consideration in this type of AM, and with time when the blog or the website becomes more and more popular, the responsibility too increases.

This is type of AM is totally opposite to unattached affiliate marketing where there is no relation between the marketer and the consumers. In involved AM it is one's own reputation, management and authority is important to be successful after a recommendation results into a sale.

According to Bruce C. Brown (2009) if someone has niche products that are in high demand, then starting own affiliate program should be considered. This is return offers the person with more flexibility, authority and managerial control over the system, potential customers and the product offering. Practically giving the businessman complete control over every aspect of the business, while saving additional costs that can possible occur while promoting the product or brand using other programs and services. The processes is aided by other online marketing and branding strategies such blogging, email lists, social media and banner advertisements. The savings are the result of other individuals joining your program with an aim to earn an income by promoting and selling the products.

People joining affiliate marketing programs advertise products on other business platforms, webpages, lists and blog sites; doing the work on the company's behalf. With the global reach of the WWW, affiliate networks spread and promote the products to far off destinations because of the affiliates joining the AM program belonging to different geographical regions. Compared to conventional branding strategies, AM takes less amount of work, cost and time to earn customer satisfaction, attraction and most importantly brand recognition. Eventually, adding up to high sales figures.

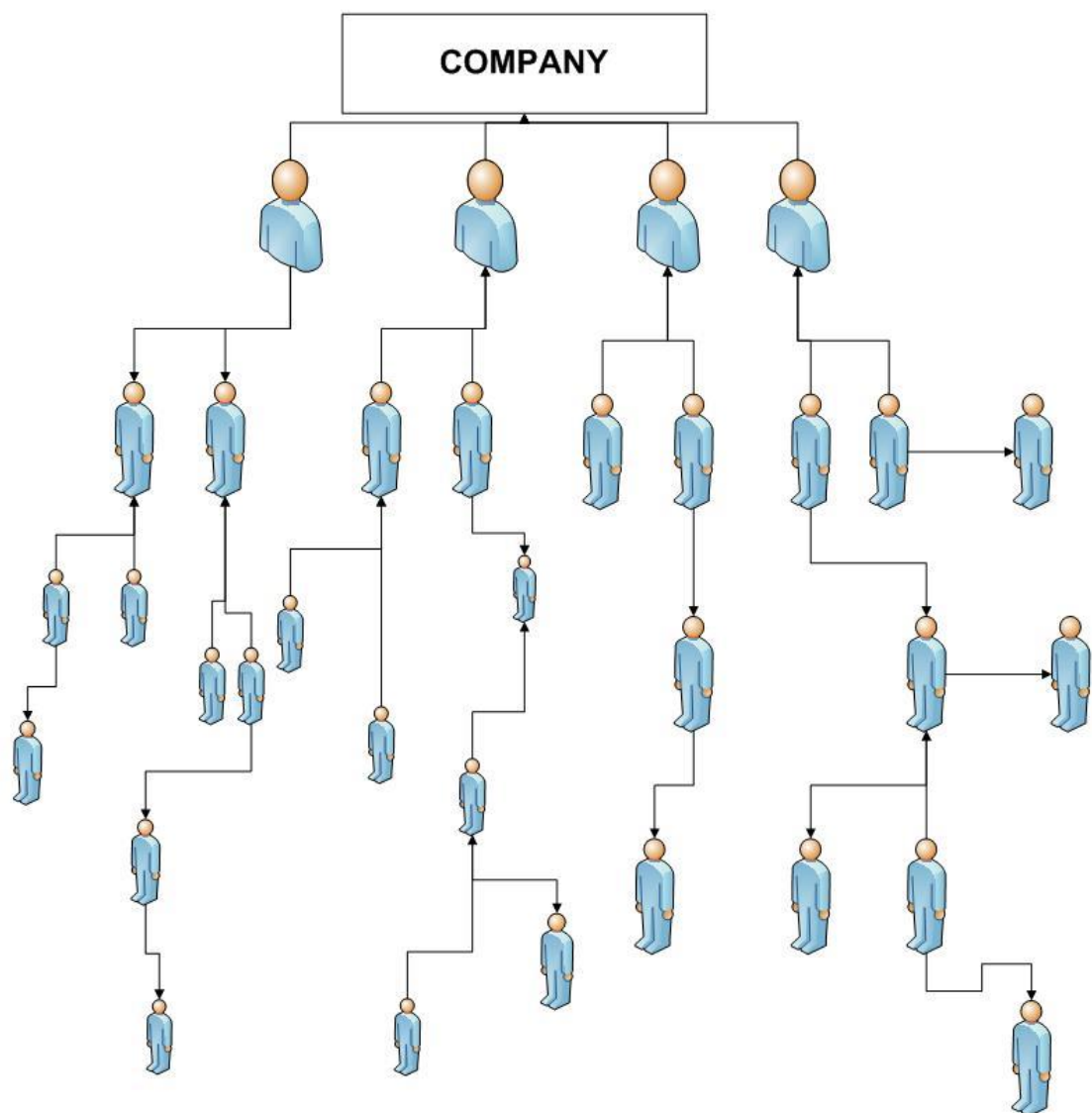
Many businesses that already have some online presence overlook AM business model considering it not a worthy option when they already have a webpage to sell their product offering and giving away commissions will only lessen their profit margins. But what they fail to understand is the fact that AM results into better market growth compared to normal website sales. The logic is pretty simple, instead of a single site, the business's products are promoted and sold on a number of sites and blogs, making it easy for potential and current customers to find the products or services. More and more people start to learn about the products, marketing and branding process becomes easier, and this is called **Viral Marketing**.

Before establishing a new AM program, there are certain questions that are needed to be answered to determine if the AM program is the right choice for the business endeavor, especially when Branding is one of the key objectives.



Figure 23: Questions to Answer to Determine The Suitability of The AM Model (Extended from Bruce C. Brown 2009)

Multi-Level Marketing (MLM) and Two Tier Marketing are two models that have great potential to help expand a business throughout the market, and that too very quickly. Both these business models have the same basic logic of going into different levels within the network for sales. According to Stephen Licciardello (2011) Multi Level Marketing (MLM) is a concept of doing business that is dependent of marketing through a network. According to this definition of MLM, every affiliate who is part of the network is motivated to promote and sell the product that in result spreads awareness about the product, increases sales volume and expands the whole network.



MULTI LEVEL MARKETING

Figure 24: An Illustration of MLM

The main feature of this business concept that actually makes it an attractive system both for the company as well as the affiliates is that it creates a no risk, high value situation. It is a win win situation for both parties, the company benefits from increased sales and wide stretch promotions, and the new affiliates are given the chance to be part of a lucrative business system (Stephen Licciardello 2011). Like any other business concept, MLM too requires certain key skills for success, figure 25 illustrates the key skills required to be successful in MLM (extended from Stephen Licciardello 2011).

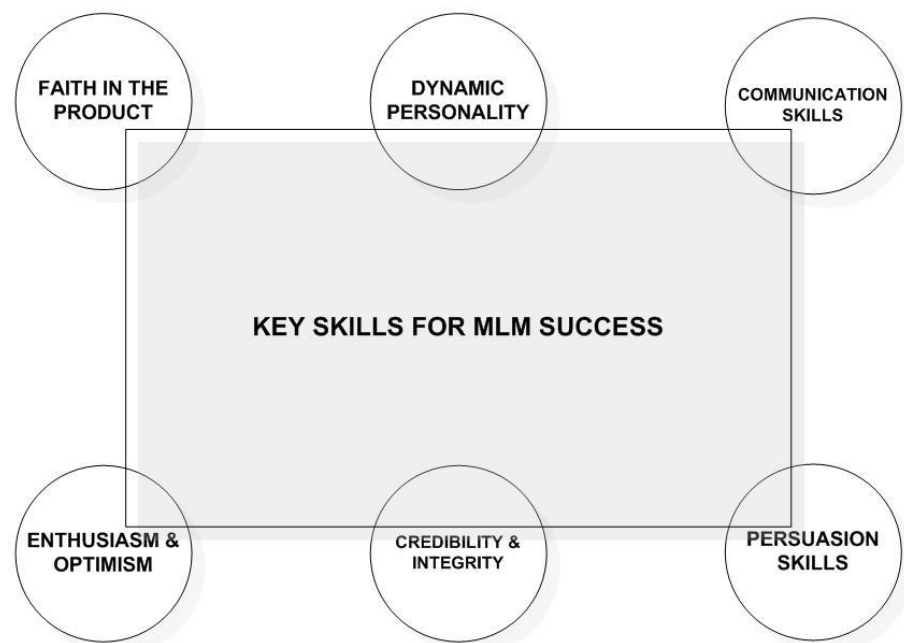


Figure 25: Key Skills for MLM Success (Extended from Stephen Licciardello 2011)

4.1.6. Mobile Advertising

With growing number of mobile (wireless) device users every day, it is impossible to ignore the use of mobile systems as a platform for promotion, marketing and branding purposes. Originally made to improve communication, fast paced evolution of technology has today made mobile devices more than a calling or texting device. A mobile device in today's time practically means a system that can almost serve all purposes with the relevant application installed.

Mobiles have evolved from being a mere communication device into a necessity. It is not only a calling or texting device, it has the functions to play music, turn up the radio, watch TV channels, and execute business and technical operations like any other desktop or a laptop and many more.

Geographical distances do not matter anymore, and Globalization has taken off immensely. Mobile wireless connections have omitted the boundaries and have brought people much closer. These systems are diffusing globally, much faster than any other form of communication because communication and keeping contact with one another has become an integral part of any society (Manuel C. et. al, 2009). Considering the simple addition of camera and internet functions have enabled common people to share their special moments with each other regardless of their physical distances. In addition to that, the simple camera function lets users avoid carrying heavy cameras, making it an overall convenient experience for users.

"Mobile users will do everything desktop users will do, but it must be presented in a usable way. So do all that you can to make sure as many people as possible can access your content and functionality."

(Brad Frost, Source: Bradfrostwest.Com)

With over 5 billion mobile device users around the world, it is predicted that soon the number of mobile devices will surpass the total world population. Figure 26 shows how mobile adoption and market share has grown over past two years (Source: Infographic, AF-Studion & Super-Monitoring).

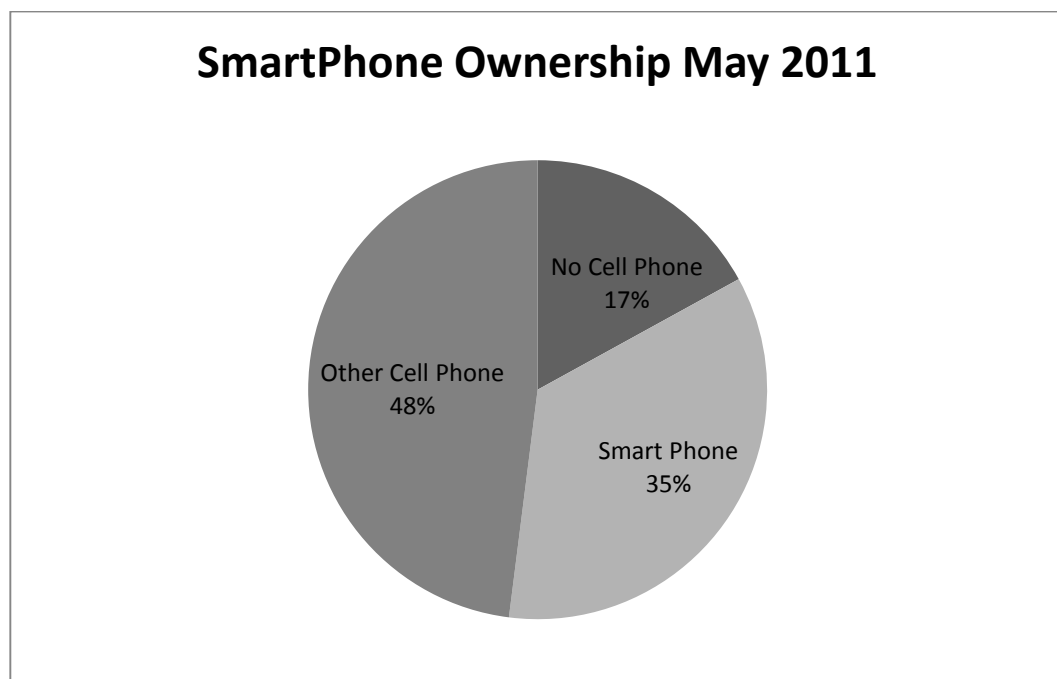


Figure 26: Global Smartphone Ownership May 2011 (Extended from Infographic, AF-Studio & Super-Monitoring)

These figures changed dramatically over a course of few months with smart phones acquiring majority of the mobile phone market share as illustrated in Figure 27.

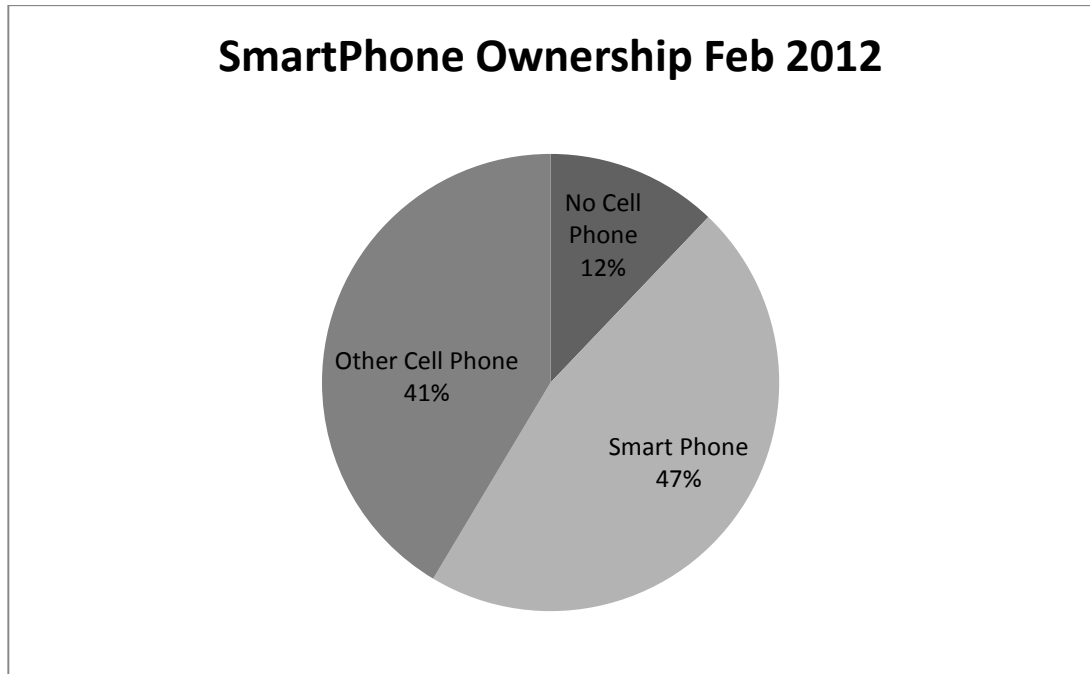


Figure 26: Global Smartphone Ownership Feb 2012 (Extended from Infographic, AF-Studio & Super-Monitoring)

These figures for smartphone sky-rocketed by the end of May 2013 with smartphones holding approximately 56% of the total phone market while the market share of other cell phones dropped from 48% to 35% over the course of two years.

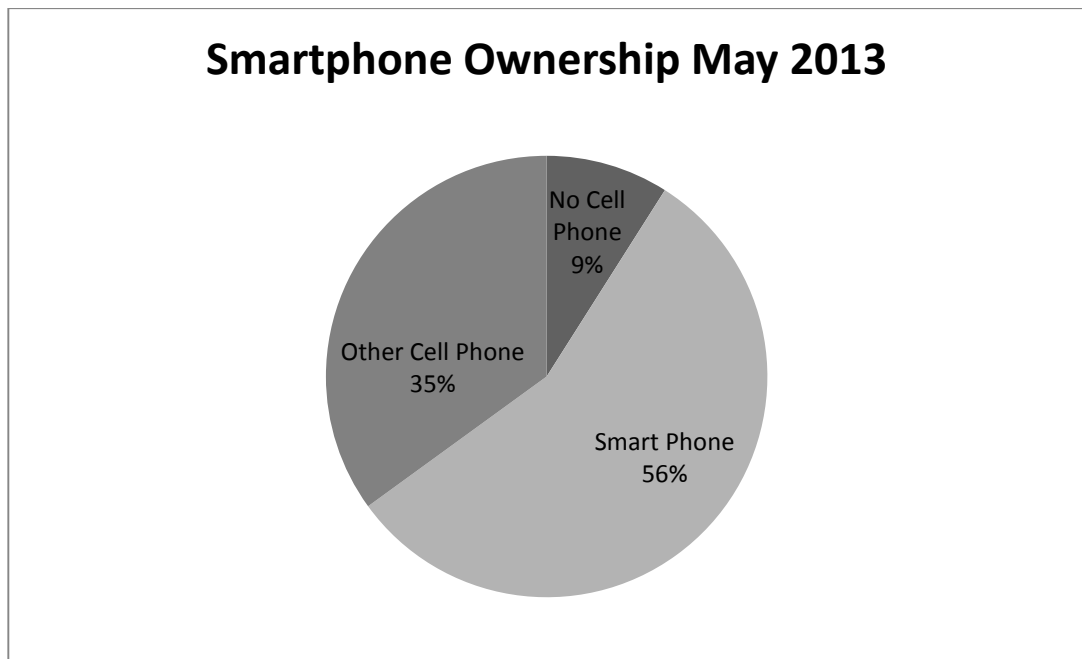


Figure 27: Global Smartphone Ownership May 2013 (Extended from Infographic, AF-Studio & Super-Monitoring)

In the area of mobile devices, tablets are the second most favorite devices and have shown a great increase in their demand over the years. The primary reason for its popularity would include easy use, diversified functions, affordability and access to internet. According to Infographic prepared by AF-Studio and Super Monitoring (2013), it is expected that more than 2 billion mobile devices will be shipped all over the world by the end of 2013..

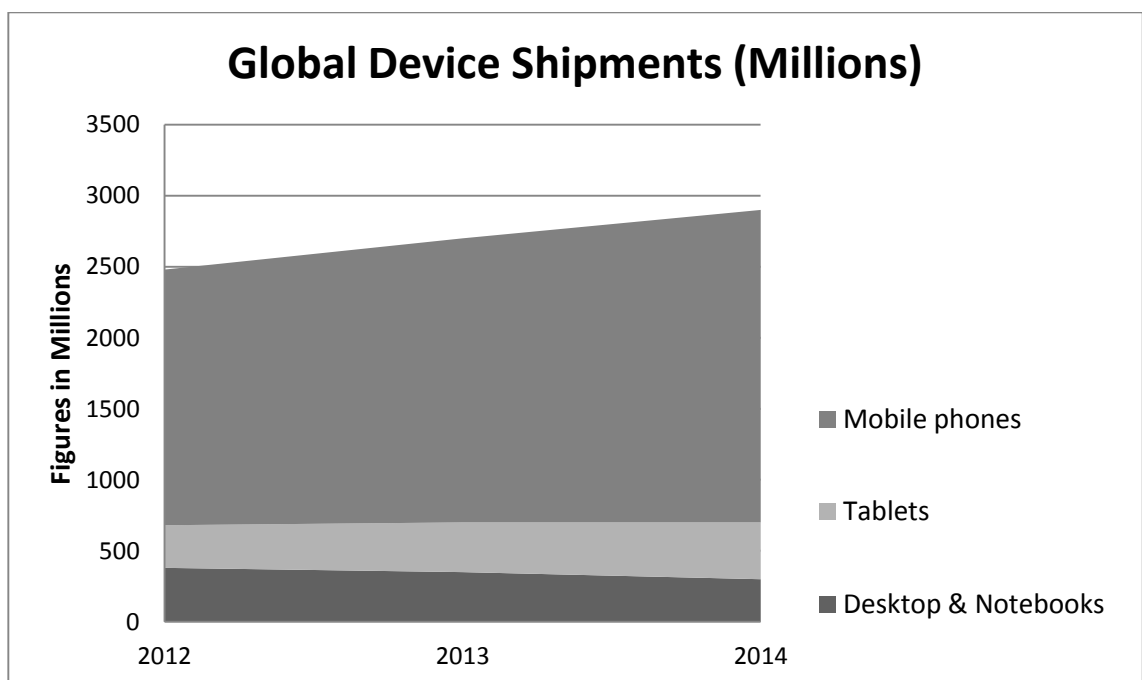


Figure 28: Global Mobile Device Shipments (Extended from Infographic, AF-Studio & Super-Monitoring)

Unlike other communication and media technologies, the internet became a house hold name in a very short time period. Internet’s global reach and ability to offer a vast variety of services and affordability, the global internet users are increasing constantly. And this played an integral part in making mobile and wireless devices so popular. Figure 29 shows comparison of time it took various communication and media technologies.

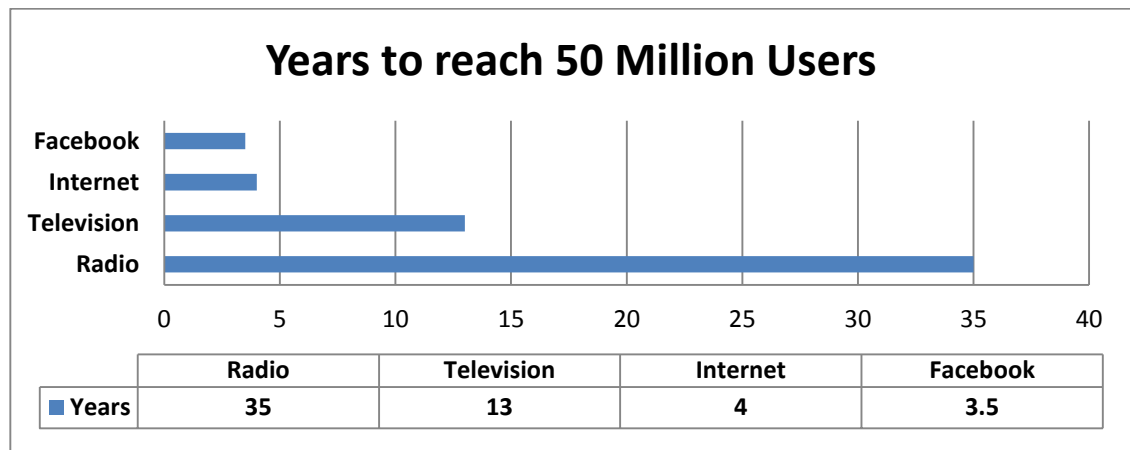


Figure 29: Time it took to hit 50 Million Users (Extended from Infographic, AF-Studio & Super-Monitoring)

As portrayed in ”Infographic by AF-Studio & Super-Monitoring” (2013), the most common mobile device usage activities include:

- Over 50% of global mobile web users use their mobile devices as the main or exclusive way to log-in and get online.
- On an average, a user uses 6.5 applications (apps.) during 30 days.
- And over 80% of the time spent on a mobile device is spent in applications (apps).

Below in figure 30. Is a portrayal of how an average consumer of Android or iOS (Apple O.S) operating system spends his time when connected to a relevant mobile device.

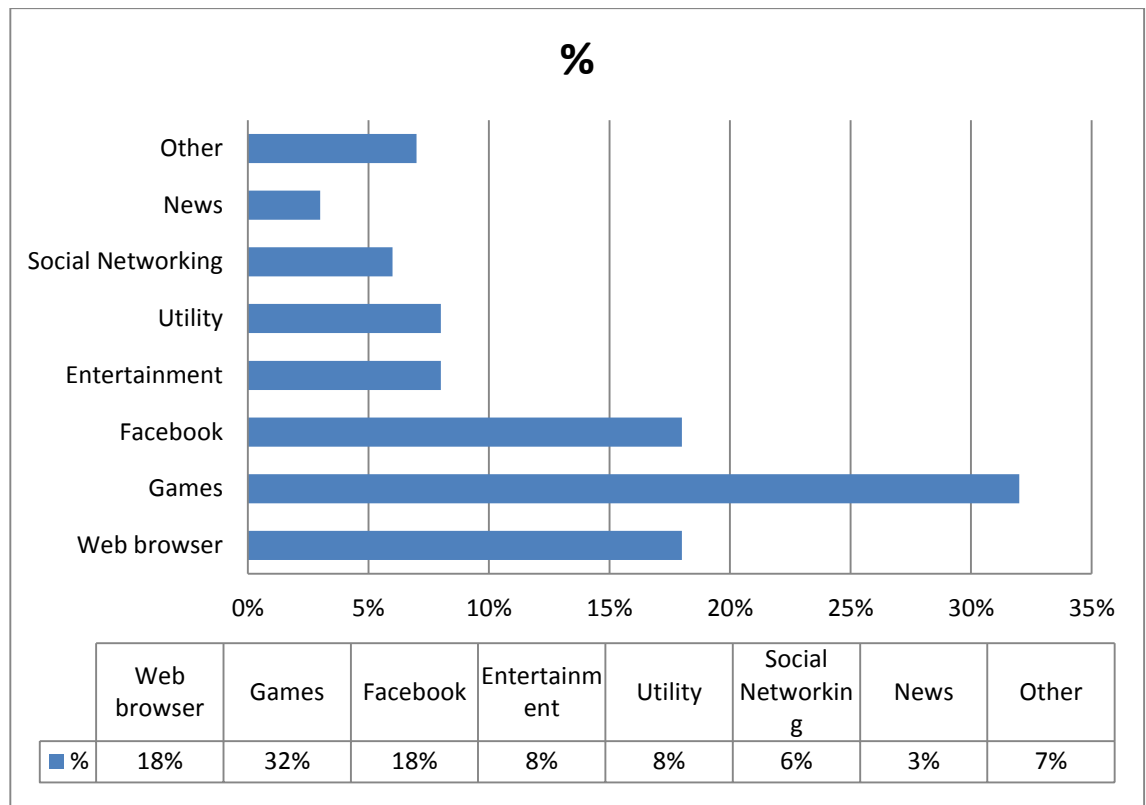


Figure 30 (a): Time Spent on Android & iOS connected Mobile Devices

Such activities have resulted into (AF-Studio & Super-Monitoring, 2013) :

- ⇒ Compared to 1990s, web adoption is 8 times faster in the present times.
- ⇒ Traffic generated through mobile devices contributes more than 15% of the total internet traffic.
- ⇒ More than 1.2 billion people access internet with their mobile devices.
- ⇒ Over 25% of all emails are opened on mobile phones.
- ⇒ Over 10% of all emails are opened on tablets.
- ⇒ One Quarter of all internet searches are from mobile based searches.
- ⇒ Over 90% of mobile internet usage is for social activities, compared to 79% on desktops.

Mobile devices today have become a necessity, spending a day without such a device for many societies has become almost impossible and this phenomenon is ever-dynamic. As a primary contributor to the overall traffic generated on the internet while becoming the favorite means for social activities. Mobile technology is the protagonist of the communication industry. It consists of all the features for an ideal promotion and branding platform. Mobile advertising is the means of the future in the advertisement industry with a medium similar to online advertisement but a comparatively larger target (Glemenuda Matitern, 2013). A more detailed definition comes from Rick Mathieson (2005) who

explains mobile advertisement as mobile branding or mbranding, where the mobile medium is used to create product differentiation, generate sales and build a loyal customer base.

Companies today love to use Mobiles Ads and these ads are discovered by consumers when they use

- ⇒ Apps
- ⇒ Retailer Websites
- ⇒ Mobile Search Engines
- ⇒ Video Websites

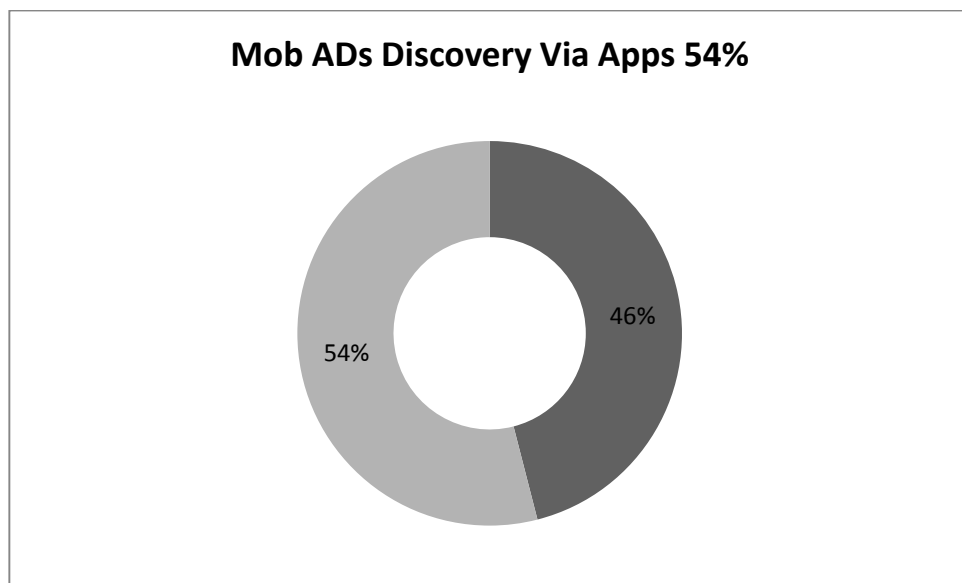


Figure 30 (b): Percentage of Total Mobile Ads Advertised that are discovered

Since more than 80% of the time spent on mobile is spent on applications (apps.). They become the greatest source for discovering mobile advertisements by the users. The second most important source on mobile devices that help in getting the mobile Ads discovered via search engines. Approximately 40% of the total ADs published on search engines get recognized by mobile device users.

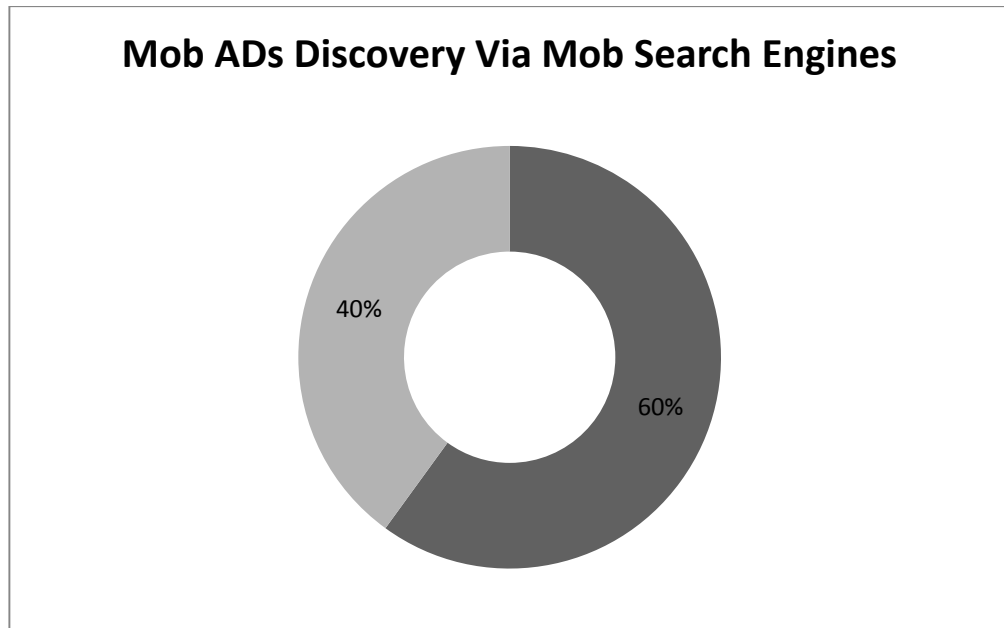


Figure 31: Percentage of Total Mobile Ads Advertised that are discovered Via Search Engines

Comparatively lesser discovery rate on retailer websites and video websites; 27% and 23% respectively.

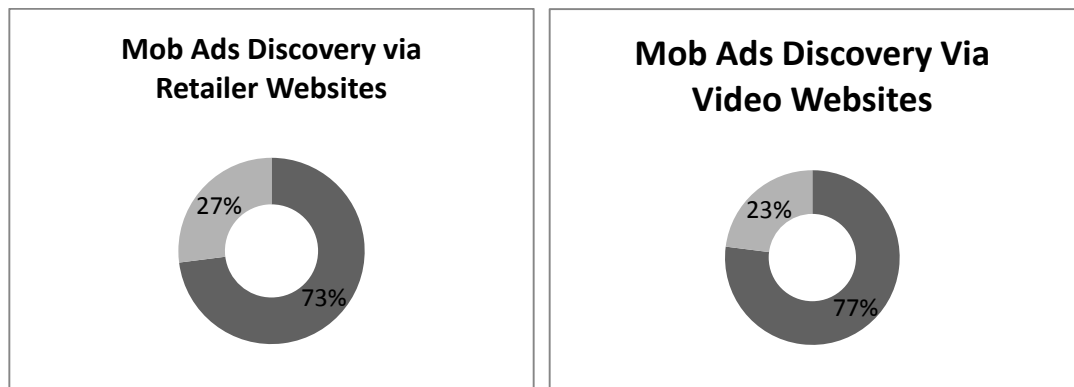


Figure 32: Percentage of Mobile Ads discovered Via Retailer Websites & Video Websites

The more important consideration here is to understand the success rate of the discovered mobile Ads that actually achieve the desired results. How many of the discovered ads result into:

- ⇒ Downloaded Apps.
- ⇒ Visiting Advertiser's Website
- ⇒ Visiting the Store or Business
- ⇒ Finding the Advertiser on map
- ⇒ Making a phone call to the Advertiser

Studies have revealed that 80% of the mobile Ads discovered via apps result into downloading the app. Figure 33 shows how many of the consumers are influenced and convinced to buy the idea of the mob ad.

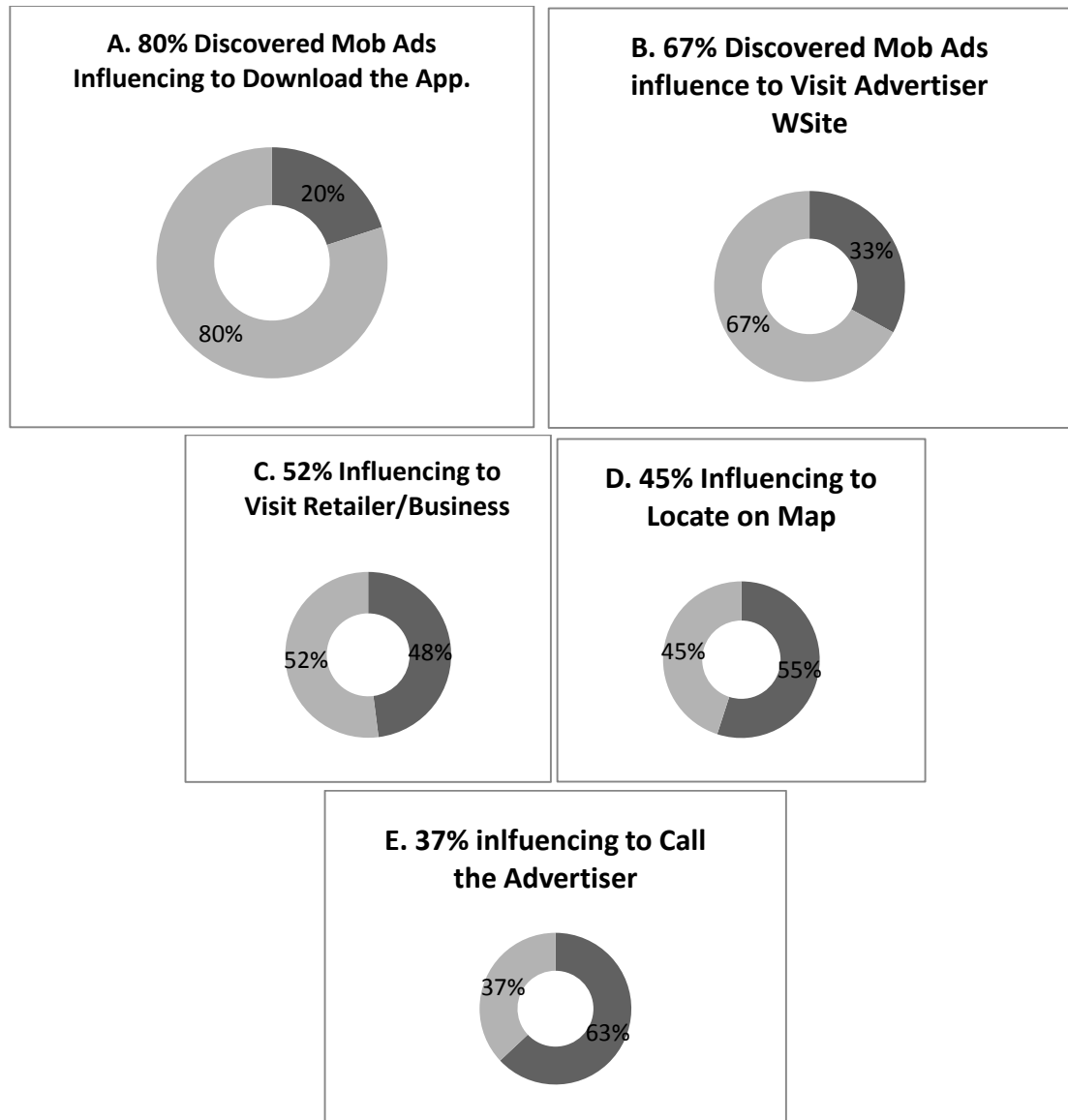


Figure 33(A, B, C, D): Convinced and Influenced by Mobile ADs

Mobile advertising has taken the world of online advertisement by storm with its global as well as geo targeted reach and success rate. Mobile ad market has experienced tremendous growth in the past few years. Opera Media Works, the main platform for mobile ads leaped from a 240 million dollars in mobile ad revenues to mobile publishers in 2011 to over 400 million dollars during the year 2012 and with over 500 million dollars in 2013 (OperaMediaWorks, Q2 2013). Every time an ad is viewed by an individual, it is called an impression, and among Operating Systems (OS), iOS (Apple) surpasses every other OS in terms of monetization. iOS leads both revenue generation as well as

impression volume with a towering 44% share of all the mobile ad impressions and nearly 50% of all the mobile ad revenue. Android share almost the same situation in terms of capturing mobile ad impressions but it is iOS that leads as shown in Figure 34 and Table 10.

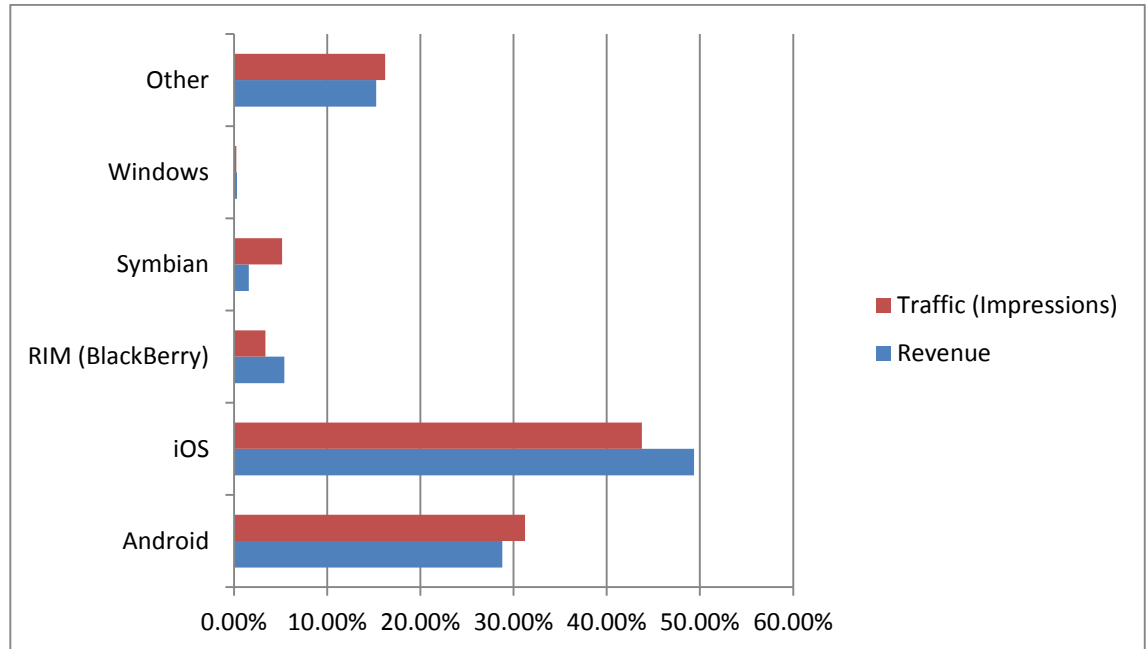


Figure 34: Traffic Share of Mobile Devices, 2013 (Extended from OperaMediaWorks, Q2 2013)

Table 10: Traffic Share Mobile Devices (Extended from OperaMediaWorks, Q2 2013)

OS	% Revenue	% Traffic
Android	28.80%	31.24%
Phone	27.76%	30.58%
Tablet	0.32%	0.66%
iOS	49.36%	43.75%
iPhone	36.44%	30.88%
iPad	10.21%	8.04%
iTouch	2.71%	4.83%
RIM (BlackBerry)	5.41%	3.37%
Symbian	1.59%	5.16%
Windows	0.30%	0.26%
Other	15.27%	16.21%

In the case of Opera Media Works, one of the global leaders in mobile advertising platforms, the US as a customer base leads all other regions of the world with respect to

generating revenue and driving impressions and ad requests on mobile devices. This clearly indicates the potential mobile ad industry has for businesses of all kinds and sizes.

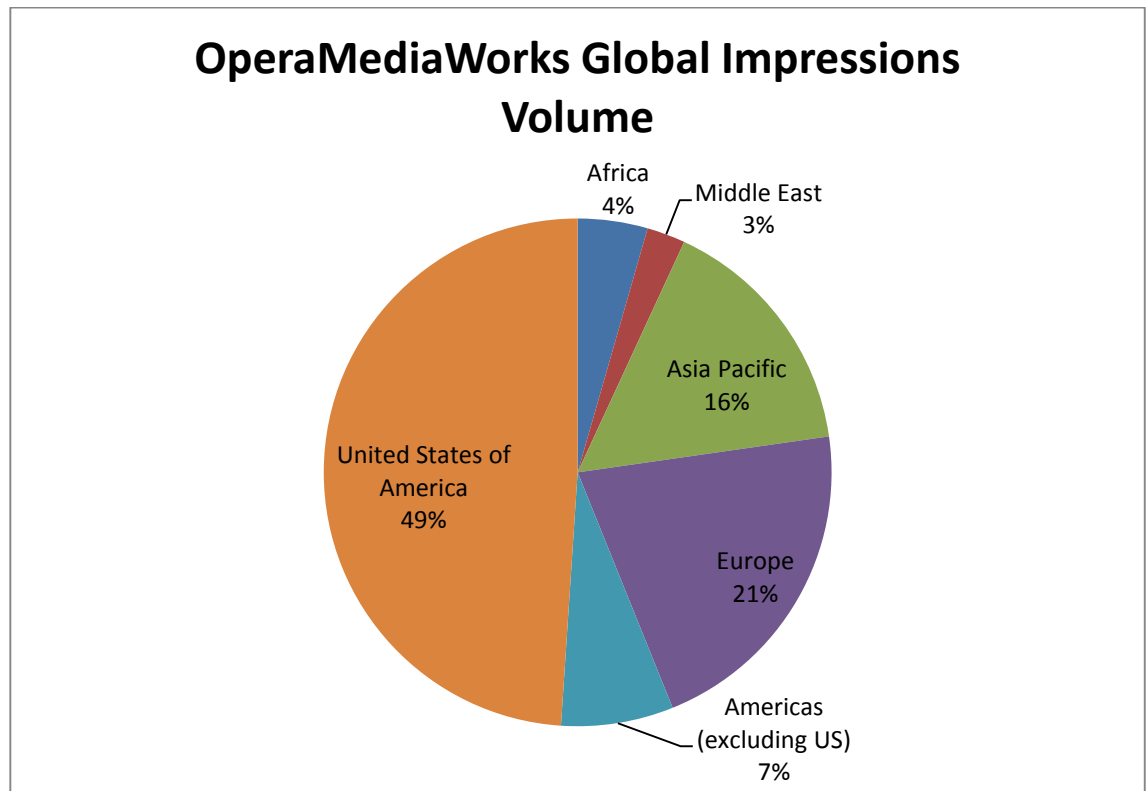


Figure 35: Opera's Global Impression Volume (Extended from OperaMediaWorks, Q2 2013)

According to Rick Mathieson (2005) mobile branding or mbranding has key benefits that surpass any other branding or advertising medium, provided it is used correctly. The main advantages include:

- **Immediacy**
The immediacy to use and surf the links again and again without having the need to remember them.
- **Intimacy**
Mobile devices, compared to other devices are the most personal devices and with great mobile usage and time spent world wide, they offer a great platform for promotion and branding.
- **Mobility**
Light weight, compatible and appropriate size of mobile phones make them one of the most convenient devices.
- **Immersion**
With other technologies and devices, a feature if properly used can be a source of competitive advantage.

4.1.7. Crowdsourcing

Crowdsourcing (CS), a combination of the words crowd and sourcing simply refers to distributing responsibilities, tasks and projects among people, majorly online but can also be offline. According to Jeff Howe (2008) crowdsourcing is simply the practice of outsourcing work to undefined groups of people instead of getting it done by a routine employee or a designated agent.

When it comes to CS, it has great influence especially in the domains of content creation and collaborative action (Parameswaran & Whinston, 2007). Surowiecki (2004) portrays CS's vast applications as solutions for coordination and collaborative problems, to cognition. Parameswaran & Whinston, (2007) explain its benefits in the disciplines of advertising and content distribution. The world renowned internet encyclopedia "Wikipedia" is a great example of CS. In Wikipedia, people contribute with their knowledge and information without charging for it.

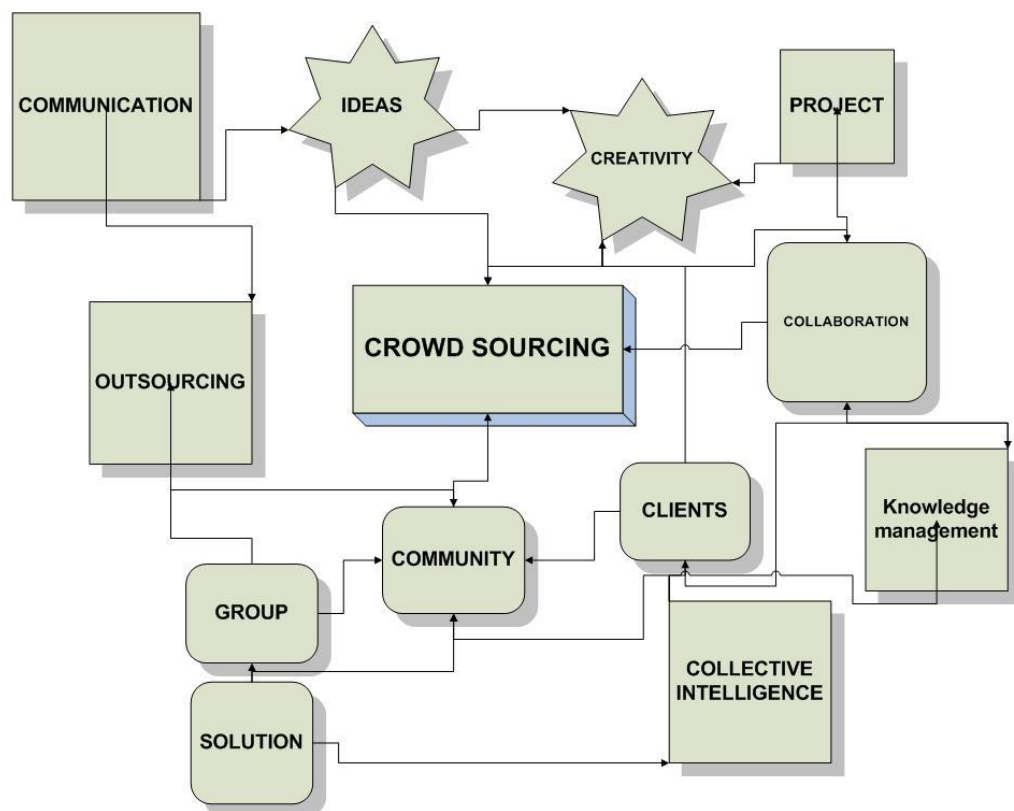


Figure 36: Illustration of Crowd Sourcing System

CS can be used for charity, government as well as for paid tasks and projects. According to Jeff Howe (2008) crowdsourcing can be categorised into four main types.

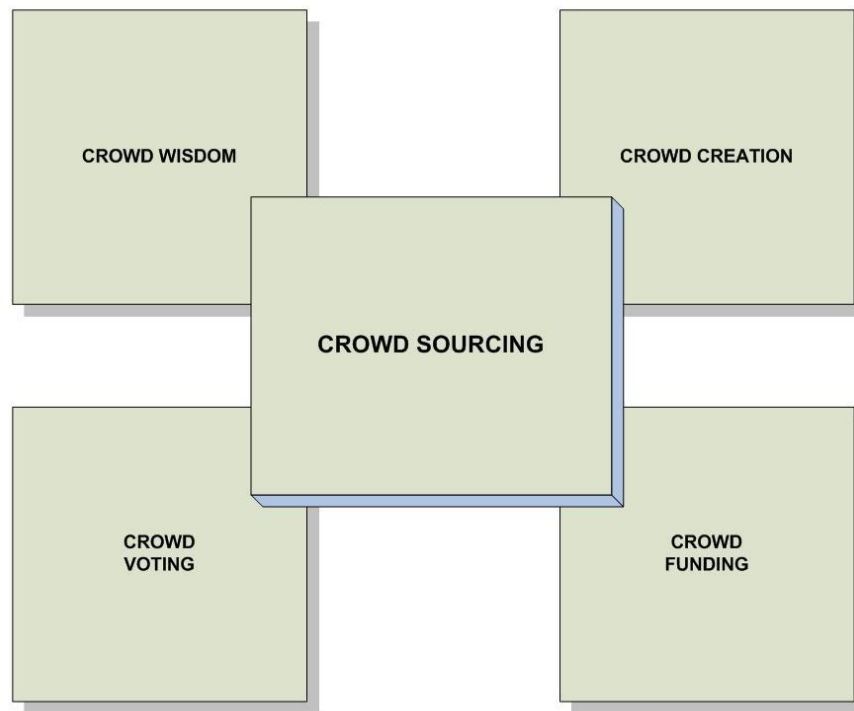


Figure 37: Types (Models) of Crowd Sourcing

- ⇒ Crowd Wisdom
- ⇒ Crowd Creation
- ⇒ Crowd Voting
- ⇒ Crowd Funding

Crowd wisdom or wisdom of the crowd concept is about using crowd's knowledge to forecast scenarios, support strategy building process and find or devise solutions for defined problems. If the conditions provided to the crowd are appropriate, they have the potential to do better than employees (Jeff Howe, 2008). Research and analysis has shown that concentrated groups made up of people with high I.Qs are often surpassed by crowds. Hollywood SE, SIM Exchange are some of the renowned examples of Crowd Wisdom.

Crowd Creation so far is the most popular type of crowdsourcing globally as it includes creation activities and can include tasks such as language translations, filming commercials and solving scientific problems (Steve Keifer, 2010). Crowd creation today stands as a new pillar for marketing and promotional activities. Brands today have permanently positioned themselves in the minds of consumers and people still search for novel brands. CS has provided people the opportunity to invest themselves in brands by contributing in it personally. Examples include, Linux, Nasa Clickworkers, TopCoder.

Crowd voting refers to the capabilities of groups to utilize their judgments in order to arrange and manage bulk information (Jeff Howe, 2008). Crowd voting often seems to

work in parallel with crowd wisdom, and creation. According to Jesper Ovist (2011) crowd voting is the concept of allowing the crowd decide what an organization needs to do, and this is done with the help of ranking or voting. Crow voting for some companies has become a routine practice, consumer companies use crowd voting to evaluate a set of ideas, and the idea that gets the most vote or ranking ultimately becomes the project to work on for the company. All TV Shows, Sports Celebrities fan ratings and related businesses where the public vote matters are examples of crowd voting. This also helps in determining the future forecasts and demand from the collected wisdom.

The phenomenon of **Crowd Funding** is traditionally defined as a plan started in order to raise money for a new business or non-profit proposal, and this is achieved by collecting different size investments from the crowd (Ordanini, 2009). The essence of crowd funding projects is to reach markets and get financial aid from serious investors. Crowd funding is gradually becoming a global phenomenon, from start-ups to music companies, software developers to financial institutions, individuals and groups belonging to different industries are taking it to the crowd funding platforms.

Referring back to figure 36, one can clearly see the several contributors and actors in a crowdsourcing environment. These participants ultimately form the key factors for any given CS model. For example, creativity, ideas, knowledge management and communication can come under the umbrella of factors such as trust, loyalty and infrastructure, while community, group, collective intelligence, collaboration can be associated with crowd capital and external factors. Based on the literature study, the key factors in any CS model can consist of:

- Relations
- Trust
- Infrastructure
- Long & Short term Strategy
- Crowd capital
- External factors
- Understanding within the masses (Crowd)

Like any other business endeavor, strong relations are of the essence in crowdsourcing, relations are built on trust and develop trust there needs to proper communication. In order to achieve this, the infrastructure needs to be very strong and clearly defined with maximum transparency. Crowd capital, which include the skills, intelligence and knowledge directly influence the success or failure of a crowd sourced project, these are the abilities and skills of the crowd (Kittur et. al, 2008). External factors such as governments' influence, business scenario and conditions, support for CS have direct influence on the the outcome of a CS project. Figure 37 illustrates a conceptual model for factors influencing CS success.

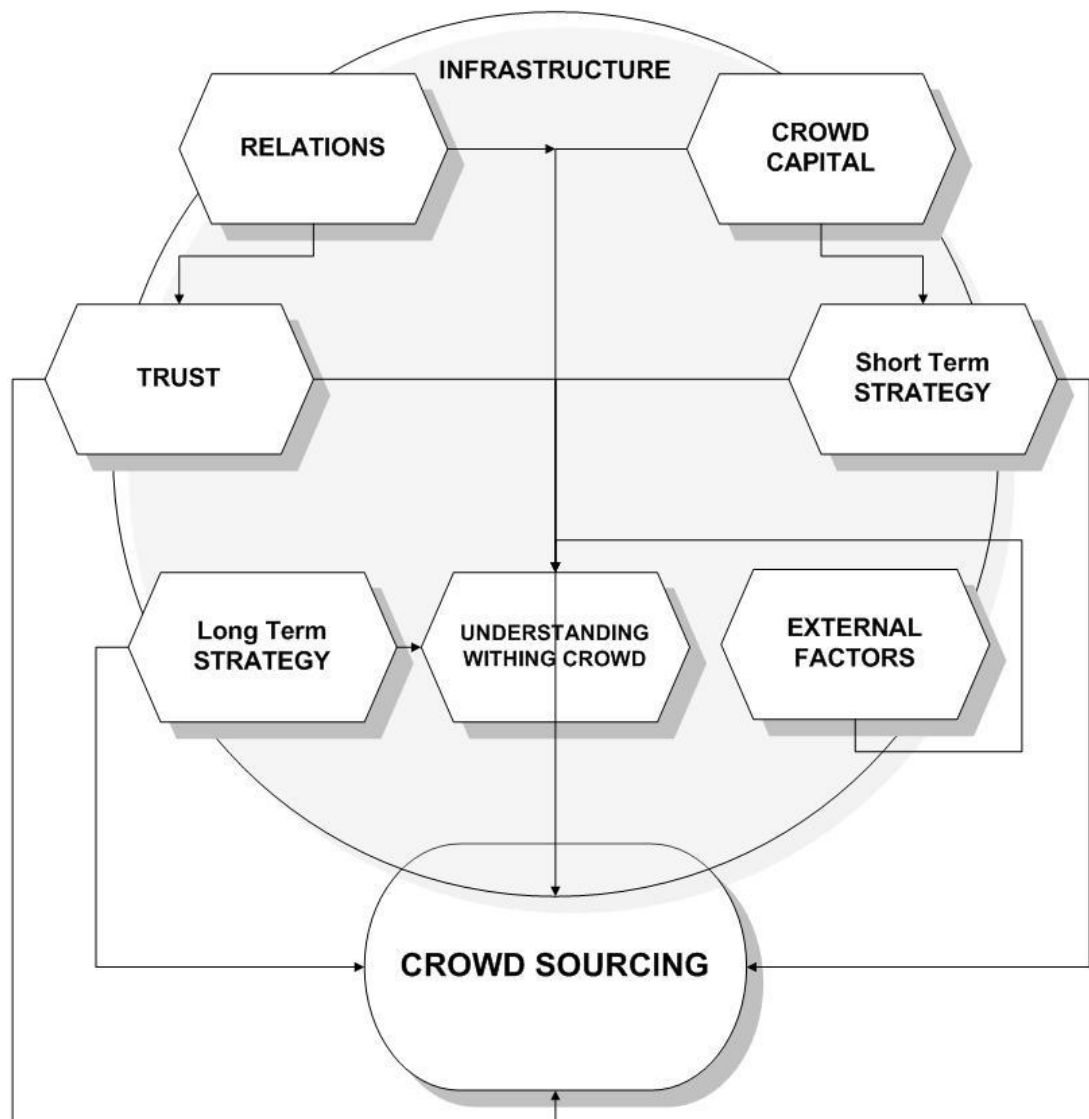


Figure 37: Conceptual Model for Factors Influencing Crowd Sourcing Success

Case studies have proven that the CS model functions very similar to problem solving models and has four different approaches towards it. According to Brabham (2011) the four different approaches are:

- Knowledge Discovery & Management
- Broadcast Search Approach
- Peer Vetted Creative Production Approach

- Distributed Human Intelligence Tasking

These four approaches form a CS typology as shown in the table 11 (Brabham Crowdsourcing Typology).

Table 11: Brabham, A Typology of Crowdsourcing (Source: Brabham, 2011)

Type	The Way it Works	Problem Types	Examples
Knowledge discovery & management	Firm gives tasks to crowd for finding and storing information at common location and in similar format	Information collection, management and reporting of problems for example creating combined resources	Peertopatent.org
Broadcast Search	Crowd given the tasks to solve empirical problems	For problems with empirical solutions	Innocentive.com
Peer Vetted Creative Production	Crowd given the tasks to select and create creative ideas	Best suited for ideation problems that require market support and research for example design problems	Nextstopdesign.com
Distributed Human Intelligence Tasking	Tasks related to analyzing and studying huge amount of info.	best suited for great scale data study and analysis especially in cases where human intelligence is required	Subvertandprofit.com

According to Brabham (2011), in the first approach, online networks and communities are given the task of exploring the knowledge and information available within the community, this result into further improving and clarifying the capabilities of a company, especially those with limited resources available.

According to Broadcast Search approach, the organization endeavors to find a single specialist willing to take the challenge, and this person is most likely from outside of the direct area of expertise but capable of using previous experience to solve a problem (Brabham, 2011)

The basic idea of Peer Vetted Creative Production is to give the crowd the opportunity to participate in the creative stage of the product, resulting into large submissions of ideas that will most likely contain some practical and valuable ideas for the market. .

Brabham (2011) portrays the Distributed Human Intelligence Tasking approach as a unique approach compared to the previous three because of the involvement of pure human element that cannot be achieved with computers.

Branding With Crowdsourcing

One of the best features of CS is its ability to market a brand. CS creates the environment for engaging existing as well as potential customers. This engagement comes from the customers being able to participate in something big, which a normal supplier-customer environment does not provide. This feel of power and participation is the actual driving force behind the branding capabilities of CS.

According to Carolyn Edgecomb (2011) CS turns customers into brand advocates because it engages and involves them in the whole process. This gives the crowd the additional feeling of being significant and worth for the company and product. Cross marketing is one of the best ways to crowd source, which involves using premium written material about the company or the product on a blog or a website, or social media. This written material comes from existing clients and thus has real time experience in it. In addition to that the customers who write the material will eventually send others to read their published material. The idea is to give the crowd a feeling of being an import part of the company, product or the branding process (Edgecomb C., 2011).

One of the best examples of branding through CS is **Mountain Dew's Dewmocracy** campaign (2007) "The Journey to Create the **Next Mountain Dew?**", a great example of collective intelligence to allow the crowd decide the name, flavor, graphics and color of the next Mountain Dew drink.



Figure 38: Mountain Dew's Dewmocracy Banner (Source: Sticky Media)

The maiden Dewmocracy campaign resulted into 470,000 votes in the United States that helped launch the new "Voltage" flavor in 2009. The same year the second Dewmocracy campaign was launched with more focus on using social media for CS the collective intelligence that resulted into more crowd participation and a new brand.



Figure 39: Mountain Dew's Dewmocracy Campaign (Source: Reno Msad)

The Coca Cola Company is another great example of using CS for branding. The global company now actively using CS as a primary part of their innovative strategy, especially using social media to co create new concepts for their products. The reason for opting CS was simple, the company simply ran out of producing creative ideas in-house and the best way was to give the huge global following a chance to generate ideas. The company decided to conduct this experiment in Asia, Latin America and North America to get different perspectives on a common subject that would help create an original idea. The objective was basically to get marketing material and positioning Coke by asking the crowd to produce prints, movies and other illustrations for the subject (Leonardo O'Grady, Reg. Director Asia Pacific, 2012 Source: David Moth, Econsultancy Blog). The company used a co creation community (Eyeka) for the creations and submissions and their social media following to help judge different ideas before finally deciding the chosen one.

The Coca Cola Company has been practicing CS through co creation for the past few years now with its projects reaching to all market zones.

Project:
THE CO-CREATE PROJECT
COCA-COLA UK

Agency:
IRIS London

Role:
Art direction, concept design, moodboards, illustration

The Brief:

Introduce the concept of co-creation, creating with recycled materials. Communicate co-creation for fashion, product design, music, film, sports and arts to 16-24 teenagers and inspire them to co-create, publish online and get exposure. Be a member and vote for hottest co-creation. Showcasing hottest co-creation of the day. Celebrity recycled co-creation (next generation coke cans by Philippe Starck).

Activity:

Pitching for digital, PR and experiential channels. Sponsored by Channel 4 Entertainment.



Figure 40: The Co-create Project, Coca Cola United Kingdom (Source: 2brains.tv)

The crowdsourcing process can be illustrated as a 7 step process that starts with the recognition of the problem, figure 41 illustrates a 7 step conceptual model for CS.

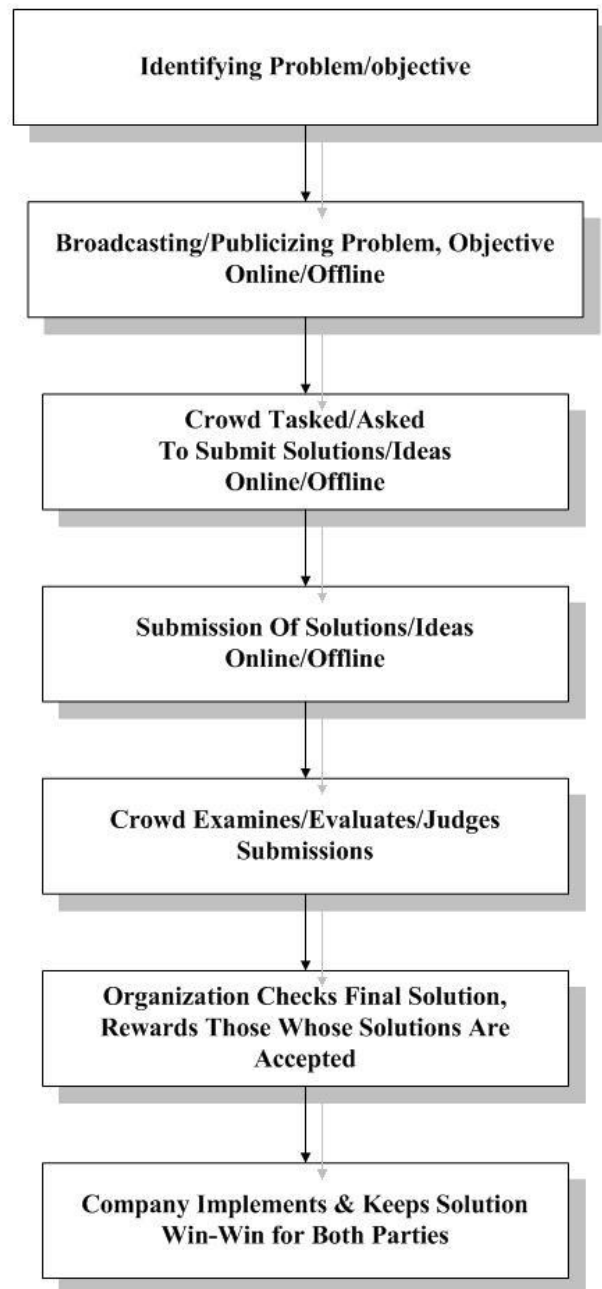


Figure 41: Conceptual 7 Step Crowdsourcing Execution Model

It is often argued that experts in a company or a specific area of expertise will always surpass the crowd because of the crowd's lack of relevant experience, qualified knowledge, groomed analytical skills and equipped techniques, but according to James Surowiecki (2007) groups (crowds) can be really smart even smarter than the smartest individual within them or the company. If the conditions provided to the crowd are right, crowds (groups) have the ability to solve even the most complicated problems. The question comes down to, "What makes these groups or crowds so smart?"

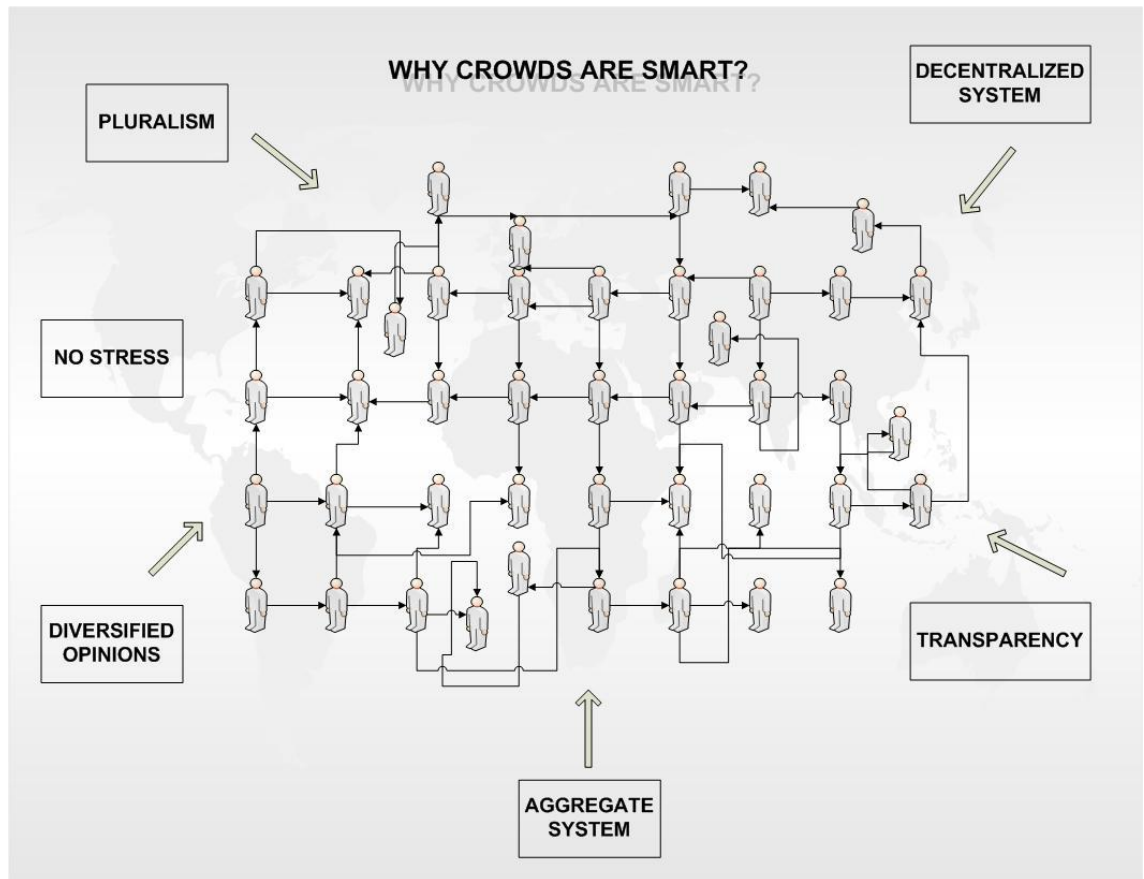


Figure 42: What Makes A Crowd Smart?

The first reason that comes to mind after literature study is the phenomenon of Pluralism, people from different backgrounds, according to Peter Lassman (2013) pluralism is the multiplicity of people and groups. And in CS projects people from different backgrounds and at times different cultures working towards a same goal. This improves the process because of different individuals sharing different perspectives, this leads to a collection of Diversified Opinions.

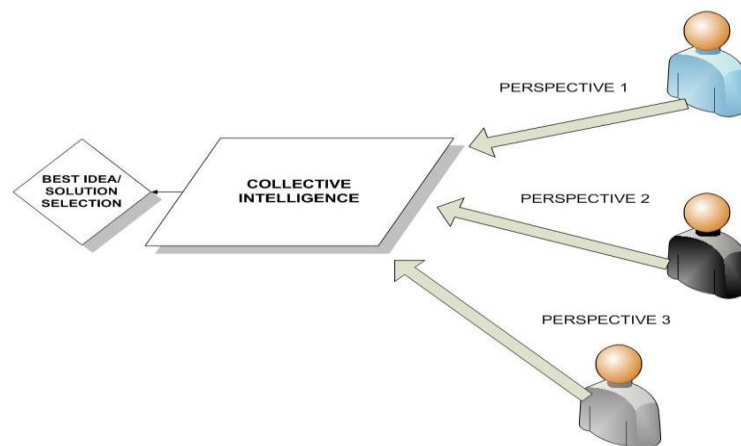


Figure 43: Illustration Of Pluralism & Diversified Opinion Collection in Crowdsourcing

Furthermore, the whole system is very much transparent and decentralized in nature, where the crowd works independently without any stress to offer solutions or ideas which they see and understand best for the problem.

Benefits of Crowdsourcing

Crowdsourcing today has become a popular problem solving process, whether it is about branding a product, starting a whole new project or finding a solution to a given problem. CS has its advantages, Daniella Cohen (2011) portrays the advantages of CS with respect to

- Quantity,
- Cost Efficiency,
- Promptness
- and Marketing Capability.

Table 12: Advantages of Crowdsourcing (Extended from Cohen D. 2011)

Quantity	The essence of CS is in the crowd and crowd has numbers. The work population is always a driving force in any business. Many firms today are successful because of their numbers (Cohen D. 2011). When a crowd works towards finding solutions for a problem, several solutions or ideas get generated thus making it feasible to have the right solution among them. The more, the merrier.
Cost Efficiency	With all kinds of management and consultancy expertise being highly expensive, people today always look for cost effective ways. Cost efficiency is one of the main features why CS is a favorite strategy for many start-ups as well as mature businesses. The company does not have to pay like it pays employees but only to those who come up with the right ideas or solutions, making CS a very cost efficient system.

Prompt	Promptness of the process stands as a great feature in CS. Because of the high number of individuals contributing, the chances of having the right solution fast, are high (Cohen D. 2011).
Great Marketing Tool	CS because of the involvement of large number of people, naturally becomes a great marketing tool. This not only helps the company by propagating the word throughout the crowd, but also makes the individuals brand advocates who support in spreading brand awareness, while the solution is being devised.

The benefit that quantity brings is its ability to reduce risk which could have been high if a single source was hired for the solution. Additionally, the risk of receiving low quality solutions significantly decreases because solvers try to do their best in order to get the financial incentives. In case of using third party CS platforms there are chances of risks for the firm, because the firms are often very much dependent on the strategic decisions made by the third-party platform (Schenk et. al, 2009).

The amounts involved in CS projects can vary depending on the type and size of CS endeavor. There are often micro payments, while in some cases millions of dollars are involved. Regardless of the case, CS projects have low cost.

Some Limitations

CS has some disadvantages and limitations as well that often depend on the genre of CS projects.

- **Crowdsourcing wrong** projects can end the client firm in a lot of trouble. Thorough study and research is mandatory, additionally it is be understood by the client firm that any important information getting leaked does not harm anything.
- **Copyrights matters** can be a problem at times, especially when the crowdsourced solution becomes a success. The authenticity of the solution should be checked with the crowdsourcee to make sure it is original work and not copied or stolen.

- **Bad Marketing** results from bad word of mouth. If a crowdsourced product fails in the eyes of the crowd involved in the CS project, it can result into bad marketing, basically killing the brand before any chance.
- **Quality and Unreliable sources** can often be major limitations in CS endeavors. The companies should know about the solvers in the crowd to assure the quality of the solutions and to make sure the solutions don't get share or given to other market players (Cohen D. 2011).
- **Pricing and Reward issues**, one of the dilemmas of CS projects is that raising the price or reward does not guarantee improved quality.
- **Confidential Matters**, when a business endeavor is crowdsourced, it becomes public since business information gets publishes online, this information can be exploited by competitors (Cohen D. 2011).

What CS does to help the branding process is its ability to **surface the product**, marketing and branding through the product itself. One way is to use key influencers, identifying key influencers in merchant areas and using them as supply and distribution point is one approach (Dorsey J. 2011). CS aids the branding process primarily in two ways, one is its feature to market with word of mouth and secondly the promptness of receiving ideas and feedbacks that help shape the product according to market needs.

5. SMEs & Branding

According to Muhammad, M. Z. et al, (2010) the role of small and medium size enterprises is always significant to the economy of a country. In Finland, the situation of SMEs is quite better compare to other countries of the world, with almost 36 SMEs per 1000 inhabitants (SBA Fact Sheet, Finland, 2013). Having large number of SMEs directly influences the employment rate, in United States 65% of new net jobs created during the period of 1992 – 2005 came from small or medium sized enterprises (US Bureau of Labor Stats, 2005).

When it comes to the size and maturity of a firm, many believe that large organizations make it unfavorable for SMEs to acquire market share, but according to Carson and Cromie (1989) small and medium size firms have their own features and skills which help them understand their market related goals and concerns. In terms of SMEs, branding and brand management is a relatively new discipline and research began as late as in the late 90s (Krake, 2005). And often in the study of brand management in books and research studies, the subject of branding for SMEs is never covered (Krake, 2005). .

With very literature and material available on branding and brand management related issues in small and medium sized enterprises, a study of this discipline is important as well as useful. In addition to that, finding branding aid for SMEs is one key objective of this research study and that can be done once the problems pertaining to brand management in SMEs is understood.

5.1. Brand Management in SMEs

According to Krake (2005) there are six aspects that define the role of BM in small and medium size enterprises. These six aspects are:

1. SMEs do not consider branding, thus brand management enough of a serious matter to put as a priority. Often SMEs pay negligible attention to brand management (Krake, 2005).
2. With the chain of command being very brief and short in SMEs, often the figure heads or top management are responsible for making strategies related to the branding process. Only a handful of SMEs have separate departments or personnel for brand and brand management.
3. SMEs are dependent on entrepreneurs as they are the visionaries who stand as the focal points for the development of a brand image and identity. A clear and direct

association is required between brand and the personality of the entrepreneur, because it's the entrepreneur who represents the brand (Krake, 2005)

4. According to Krake (2005), as much as 50% of the companies have the same brand name as that of the company's name, while the rest of the small and medium sized firms have two or more different brand names. This often results into confusion and ambiguity among customers and potentials and the brand fails to attain much attention eventually resulting into reduced business.
5. One of the conventional branding strategies is to co-brand and cooperate with other firms, but Krake (2005) explains that many small and medium sized companies either over look this option or simply do not wish to work with other companies for brand management.
6. According to Krake, the product, the brand and the corporate firm have different characteristics and features, where there are some similarities and connections, there are always some differences.

5.2. Role of BM in SMEs – Krake's Funnel Model

Krake in 2005 developed the Funnel Model (*Figure 44*) to inculcate the idea of role of BM small and medium size organizations and how BM influences SMEs.

Influence of the Entrepreneur is of the essence when it comes to BM in small and medium size enterprises since the owner participates by playing two roles. It is the entrepreneur who architects the structure of the company, this includes deciding on the type of marketing activities and staff decisions to company goals, and the degree of focus on BM (Krake, 2005). The second role according to Krake is the entrepreneur's direct contribution and involvement in the branding activities.

Influence of Company Structure is another key influencer in BM of SMEs. According to Krake (2005), the company structure consists of three parts that significantly affect the role of BM in SMEs. These three aspects are marketing personnel, awareness of brand management and objectives.

Influence of Market is another key influencer according to Krake's funnel model that has a direct control on BM in a company. The role of BM in SMEs has a direct association with the type of market they are in, the products being delivered and orientation of the market. Last, but not the least, Krake (2005) considers the state of market competition as a key aspect of influence of market on BM.

Marketing Creativity directly influences the communication and marketing processes in small and medium size organizations. If the entrepreneur, employees

and the company lack in an adequate level of marketing creativity, it not only limits marketing activities, but also narrow down the chances of practicing creative marketing (Krake, 2005).

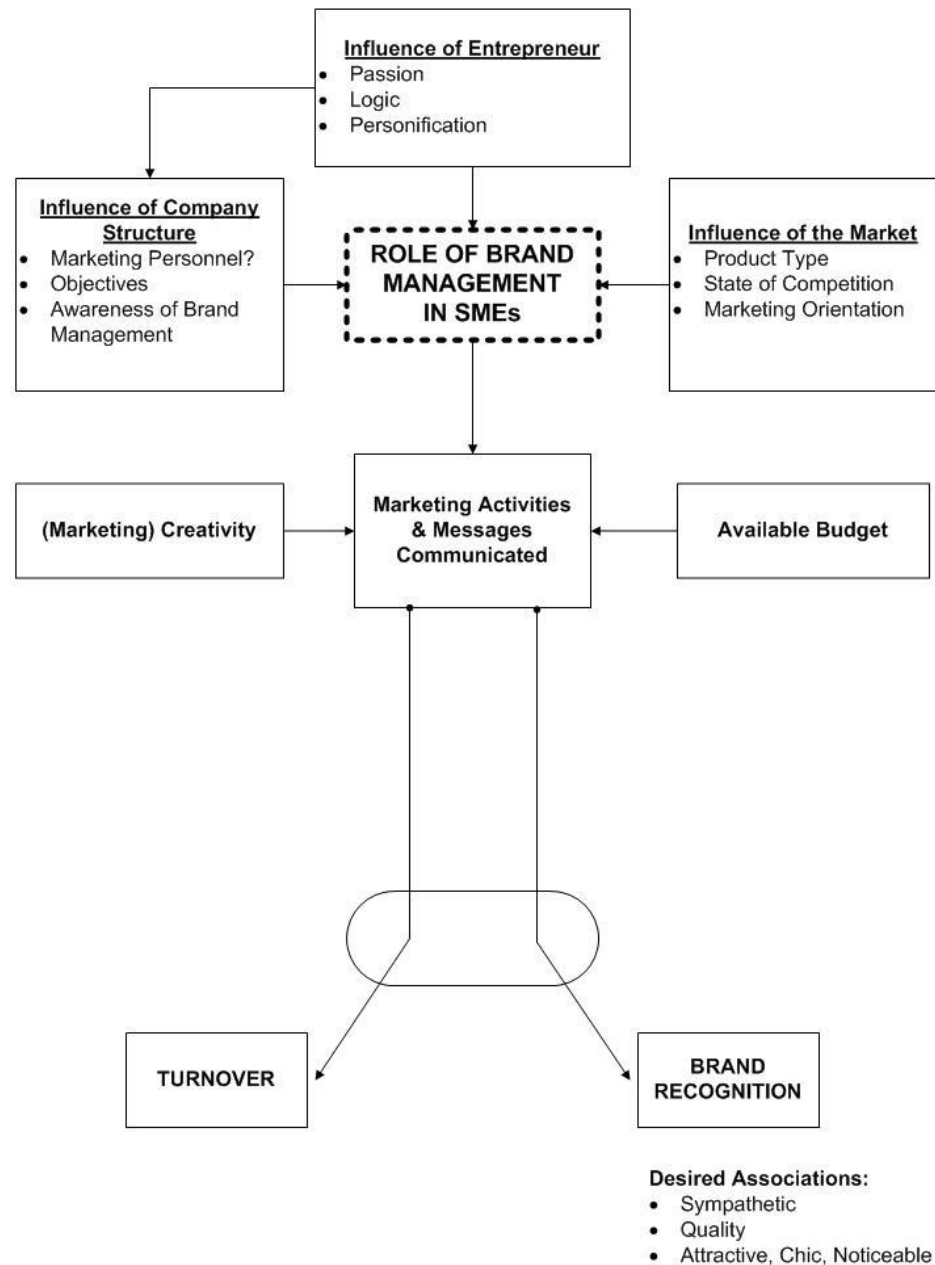


Figure 44: Krake Funnel Model for Role of BM in SMEs (Source: Krake, 2005)

Available Budget, when it comes to SMEs there is often a limited budget available for branding and marketing activities compared to larger organizations. Having a small budget is a barrier to freely practice BM in SMEs as it includes

high costs at times. And according to Krake (2005) the available budget decides several factors, including advertisement and promotion.

Marketing Activities and communication, as mentioned budget define the scope of marketing and branding activities and so does creativity. It not only defines the amount of finances to utilize for promotion and marketing but also the feedback and communication from the consumers' end. And to develop a brand image and personality with respect to the needs and expectations of the customers, communication is of the essence.

Brand Recognition & Turnover. As illustrated in Krake's (2005) funnel model, brand recognition and turnover have a direct association with the messages communicated and marketing activities. Krake (2005) explains that the marketing and communicated messages are responsible not only to increase the turnover for the SME but also for brand recognition.

The role of brand management becomes the molder not only for promotion and marketing strategies but also for communication to and from the consumers. Then the function of BM inside the SME is measured with respect to the brand recognition in the market which falls in of the four quadrants of brand management and brand recognition quadrants (Krake, 2005).

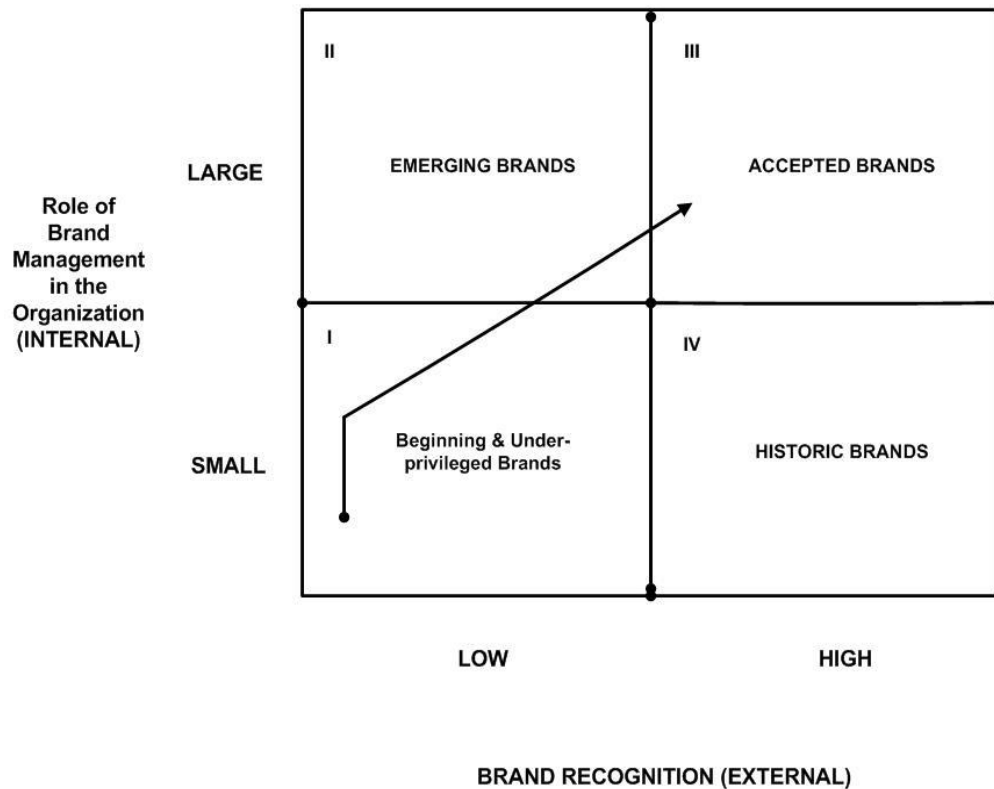


Figure 45: Brand Recognition & Brand Management Quadrants (Source: Krake, 2005)

Using these models and the literature in addition to the research in the previous chapters, the next sections will look into the stance of some SMEs, the problems faced by those companies, problems and issues generally faced by SMEs in the area of Branding and Brand management.

5.3. Branding Related Problems, Issues in SMEs

5.3.1. Lack of Knowledge About Brand Management

According to Wong and Merrilees (2005) brand management holds a significant role for SMEs as well as big organizations in their marketing processes. Although the companies have different approaches, but the significance of brand management cannot be ignored.

The important consideration here is that many managers either misunderstand what branding or brand management is, or lack the knowledge. The top management should be the ones responsible to take initiatives concerning brand management (Frank, 2005). Often the owners and top management are not aware of its significance. If they (owners,

directors, top management) do not give importance to the concept of brand management, then how can they expect or ask their sub-ordinates to focus on it (Frank, 2005).

.....Brand is often dismissed as something someone else should take care of, for them. And it is not seen something valuable for the business.

Interviewee 1

One common problem with most SMEs today is their maturity level in business markets, Boyle (2003) and Krake (2005) suggest that small and medium sized enterprises are quite immature in their markets. This is primarily because of not having the understanding or lack of sufficient knowledge about branding. Very small businesses such as corner stores and shops often do not even know that they have or are a brand (Merrilees, 2007). Additionally, Frank (2005) inculcates that due to having different company names than brand names, SMEs find it really difficult to gain the attention of people, as a result many business opportunities might be lost. Despite having a brand, and brand management knowledge. Such SMEs fail to understand brand as a significant part of their business.

According to Wong and Merrilees (2005), one common problem with owners and directors of SMEs is that they look at branding as something only restricted to advertising, name and sign/logo. Though advertising using channels such as the electronic and print media are important, but according to Wong and Merrilees (2005) personal interactions for selling hold greater significance when it comes to marketing in SMEs.

Not having sufficient knowledge may lead to restricted or limited understanding of the most fundamental actions such as regularly updating and developing business strategies, including the branding strategy and this often leads a company into a death pool.

....it is a continuous process as the market is always changing. And the minute you stop innovating and reevaluating, your business dies as there will always be someone else innovating and trying to steal away your leads and customers.

Interviewee 1

5.3.2. Insufficient Resources & Time

According to Wong and Merrilees (2005) the problems and issues associated with brand management in SMEs also include factors such as lack of time, relevant resources, systems, procedures and structures required to execute branding processes. Any hurdles

or problems to the branding activities in SMEs directly hinder their business activities; the main obstructions include insufficient monetary resources and human expertise. (Wong and Merrilees, 2005). As a result, the entrepreneurs and top management are forced to focus on relatively short term goals such as improving their routine activities, sales processes and production efficiencies. Focusing on short term strategies is a productive thing, but too much emphasis can make it difficult for companies to develop and focus on long term business strategies (Wong and Merrilees, 2005).

SMEs need to understand that they lack sufficient time, human and financial resources required to execute branding activities. According to Abimbola and Vallaster (2007) new companies have certain branding requirements because of not having sufficient resources, organizational systems and structures and the basic need to develop a reputation (Petkova A.P. et. al, 2008) if they want to attract customers.

In addition to the previously mentioned problems, absence of a branding expert is another great issue faced by SMEs. Brand managers and marketing professionals consider a brand to be valuable if it successfully manifests value to the customers (Boatwright, P. et. al, 2009). Furthermore, according to Boatwright, P. et. al, (2009) developing a brand to meet customer perceived value is a bold decision if the firm wishes to obtain market share. But the main problem for new and small companies in common is the question of creating a brand identity (BI) that can not only meet the needs of current and potential customers, but also be able to maintain the features of the product simultaneously (Boatwright, P. et. al, 2009). However, according to Boatwright. P. et. al, (2009) many entrepreneurs and brand managers in SMEs often fail to achieve this due to the lack of skills required to study and understand the methods for connecting customer needs with their product offerings and brand, and lack the abilities to locate the clients that best match with the firm's capabilities.

Also, it is possible that certain organizational processes which may require resources normally, could be executed even with minimal or no resources. One such great example is the lunch event of TeamUp. The event was adequately executed without using any of the company's monetary resources.

I had this idea of having winter ice castle with a white theme, and ice sculptures, drinks, food, cake, musicians, 200 guests but we had zero budget. But we had all these companies donate for us. We have partners who are helping us in putting a clear branding message and we are getting there.

Interviewee 1

It is quite an impulsive and premature opinion developed by many entrepreneurs of SMEs that such operations could not be done without high resources. With the right strategy and

idea, it is not necessary to complete branding processes only if the company has sufficient resources.

I won't say you need a lot of financial resources for this, but yes you do need some resources. And we have put every bit of our money into the development, and were left with no money for branding and marketing at all, yet we had this launch party,

Interviewee 1

Lack of knowledge and fear of nothing can further lead to missing out on initiatives that a StartUp or an SME can actually take to start their branding process. As sometimes, things are not as complex as they may seem. Rather they turn out to be quite simple. That is one of the main reasons why many new small companies may consider branding a high resource consuming process, despite it being a simple, less costly endeavor for them (depending on the nature of the company)

I think that is just a lame excuse (considering Branding to be costly all the time) for not focusing on branding. Branding is something what people see and what they hear, what they feel. All you need to do is think about what you want people to feel. And that is not too expensive, unless you need to hire someone specifically with a certain hourly rate. It is not an expensive ordeal.

Interviewee 2

5.3.3. Lack of Sufficient Involvement by Employees

Owners and brand managers in firms, especially SMEs can play a significant part in the development of a brand as well as in brand management (Krake, 2005). And according to Frank (2005) the owners and management are the key individuals to handle and manage brands. It is pivotal for the management to have high degree of involvement in the branding activities.

However, in SMEs and their branding activities the branding related decision making powers are with a handful of managers, while the rest do not have a say in it (Ojsali, J. et. al, 2008). The same problem has been identified by Krake (2005) where brand management responsibilities in all cases were with the top level managers, and did not include the sub-ordinates. Ojsalo, J. et. al (2008), suggest that everyone within the company should be involved in brand management.

Additionally, a possible reason for the lack of involvement could be an outcome of lacking a strong motive. When there is a degree of passion involved, in order to reach an

aim, the results are often fruitful compared to the efforts that lack strong passion and motive.

I have always been an entrepreneur at heart, with my own 3 companies in the past. With TeamUp, the motivation came from volunteer work such as fund raising as I had experience in FundRaising..... And it was my passion to do something meaningful and positive for people. To give back more to the world than I take.

Interviewee 1

And in the absence of such stimulants, it is highly likely the employees as well the founders may lack sufficient involvement in fundamental organizational processes such as branding.

5.3.4. Minimal Attention to Branding

As the objective of this study includes problems and issues with SMEs in the area of branding, primarily due to most of the previous studies emphasized more on large firms. According to Bresciani and Eppler (2010) the entrepreneurs in SMEs are more focused on production and financial matters, with minimal attention towards brand management. Frank (2005) states that small and medium size enterprises give little or no attention to branding and brand management in their routine activities and business strategy. This is due to the entrepreneurs do not considering branding a fundamental for initiating a business.

They (employees of SMEs and StartUps) think revenue comes from sales, and product comes from development and brand is just a side product of marketing. Just a logo thing. That is how we see the way SMEs and StartUps operate and the way they take branding.

Interviewee 2

Merrilees (2007) states that most SMEs think branding and brand management is an activity for large companies such renowned brands, automobile companies, financial institutions and global companies with a developed brand recognition. Nevertheless, with time such small and medium companies realize the importance for a brand vision as a good investment, as the costs associated with changes in corporate identity later on can be quite high (Bresciani and Eppler, 2010).

It cannot be said that all small companies intentionally or unintentionally overlook the importance of having a brand, Wong and Merrilees (2005) explain that some SMEs do understand the power of having a brand. But still many SMEs think of brand management as a need only for large organizations.

It is fundamental! It is the second most important thing to the product. It is the personality of the company; it is how they present themselves. Branding also allows companies to connect with their potential customers. Branding is just not a logo, not just a set of colors or business cards. Branding has more to do with the message, the tone of voice you utilize

Interviewee 2

SMEs do understand the power of brand management and with time set an objective to develop and manage a brand strategy, once the set point is reached where they have sufficient time, finances and other resources (Wong and Merrilees, 2005). Small businesses such as commodity suppliers and stores often know about their brand but fail to put this knowledge into their strategy (Merrilees, 2007). Just because large companies have sufficient resources does not necessarily mean that brand management is only an option for them, yet many SMEs think that brand management is only for big firms with sufficient time, financial and human resources.

5.3.5. General Attitude towards Branding

The general attitude of people, companies and authorities is of great significance when the topic of branding is concerned. There could be a high possibility of people in certain geographies who may look at certain business wise processes differently compared to other business markets. For example the general attitude in Finland is more focused on technology than the people. This does not mean that people are overlooked, but a comparative understanding of which is weighed in more than the other.

The mentality here (Finland) is that people do not really see brand or branding as public attitude for communication. They hate the feeling of buying a logo from someone. They are really concerned about their business, and less concerned about their presentation. Then again, if someone wants to be a small business in a small market and do not want to grow, they can ignore branding. But if they want to grow and expand the business, then branding is fundamental.

Interviewee 2

Since change is inevitable in any area, so is it in the area of branding.

A lot of new companies, founded by young people have a strong focus on branding. There are a lot of Finnish clothing companies emerging, where there is a lot of focus on the brand. In the clothing market, brand is everything.

Interviewee 2

5.4. Implemented Branding Frameworks

5.4.1. TeamUp's Branding Framework (Interviewee 1)

TeamUp is a Finnish company founded in 2012 by Donna Kivirauma (CEO) and Kimmo Kivirauma (COO) in Tampere, Finland. The most important ideal in starting this company is to make a positive and ever lasting impact in the society. The company is dedicated to providing the most adequate experience for companies in order to connect them with their current and potential clients on a common platform by supporting together, the talents and causes that hold most significance to them.

TeamUp provides a unique social media community where every individual who visits the website has the chance to contribute positively in the world by coming together with other individuals who share the same beliefs and interests, and want to be part of something better and bigger. It is a unique social media community that offers great experience as well as benefits to fans, talents and businesses.

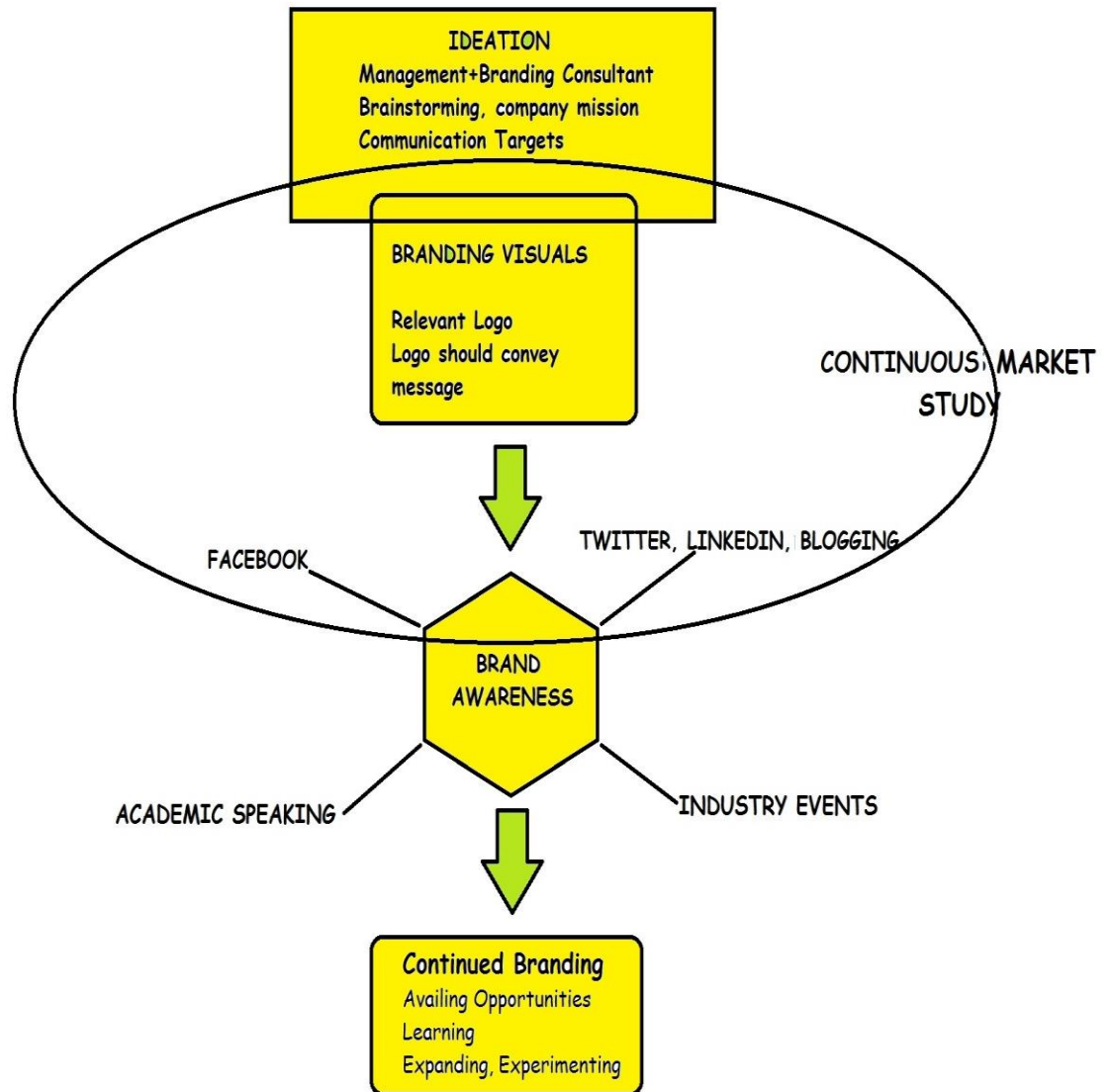


Figure 46: Branding Framework of TeamUp

As seen in the framework, branding began with the fundamental Ideation phase. In this phase a branding consultant was hired to develop the TeamUp logo. It is always critical to construct the right logo, consisting of adequate color and themes, and taglines to convey the message to the target audience. Continuous market study is the soul of any branding process. And it cannot be stopped at any point. It not only defines the present actions and targets, but also potential ones. TeamUp made use of reports for IEG and Sponsor Insight to study the market, as well as other publications that were found readily on the internet.

The company did not have a huge budget for raising awareness so free or less costly campaigns had to be done. According to Donna Kivirauma, they had to do grass root campaigns in Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. These campaigns are fruitful but slow. So,

other platforms had to be used to supplement the online campaigns. In order to do so, events both industrial as well as academic were utilized. Events are always a great way to build awareness for a brand. Branding is a never ending process, it should evolve with time as the company grows and matures. With generation of more revenue, a company must dedicate a certain portion of its financial resources for its branding operations to better execute the awareness of its brand.

5.4.2. PitchMe's Branding Framework (Interviewee 2)

(PitchMe Branding Model as explained by CMO Miika Kenttämies, CPO Josef Pacal)

It is a platform where people can come and share ideas, pitch their businesses. In future companies could facilitate innovation and ideation, where you could find fascinating people and ideas. It allows the users to capture every idea from any available device. It is a great step towards simplifying the concept of open innovation.

With this platform, every individual within the organization can not only create, but also review and submit quality feedback to ideas quickly in one combined place. It is not just another enterprise app. It is a unique web service that allows the users to access the service anywhere using the internet.

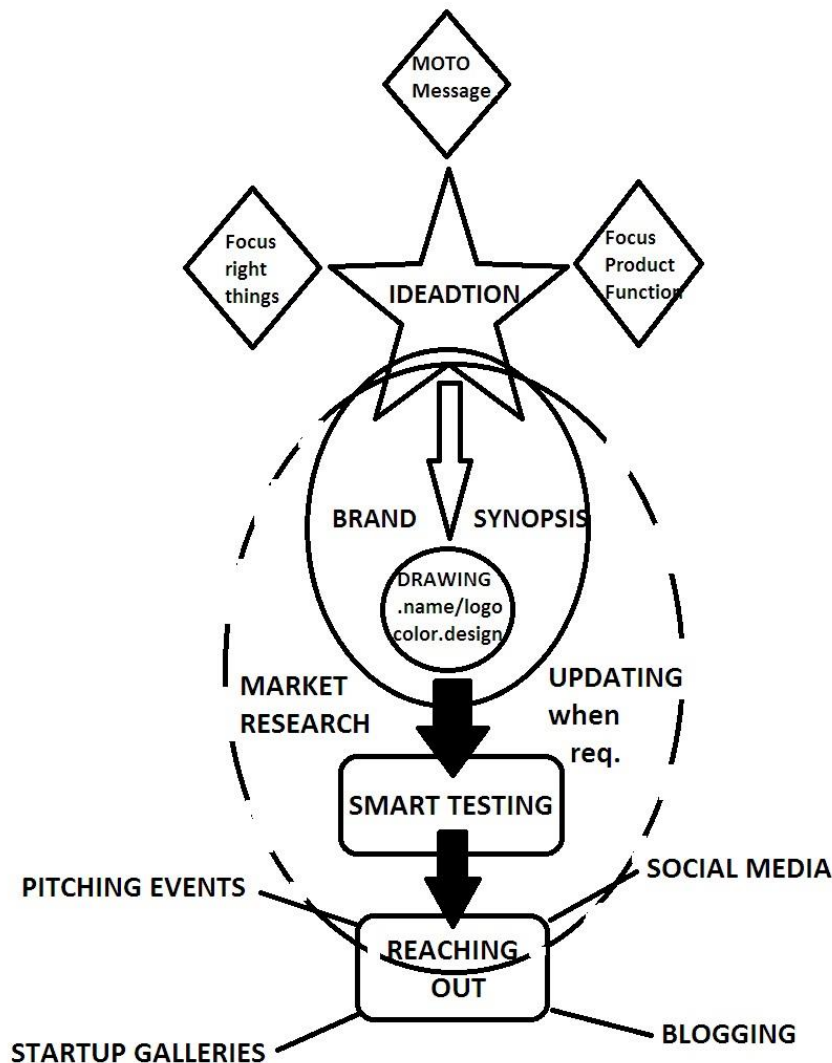


Figure 47: Branding Framework of PitchMe

The ideation stage of PitchMe's branding approach consisted of focusing on the right things of the product. This means focusing on the product's function. This is a dynamic process and improvements are to be made with respect to situation and requirements. Through every stage of the branding model, iteration is a mandatory part. It is important to understand that in order to get the desired objective, repeating rounds of analysis or operations is key. Similarly, the ideation phase involved a lot of analysis, repetition and study. It was during the ideation phase the motto and the message was put together. Using all this information, the plan of action for pitching the brand was put together as well. That was followed by designing and drawing the logo, selecting the relevant colors and themes. All this was built around the Brand Synopsis which of course is an outcome of the ideation phase and market research.

Pitching the brand holds great value, and if the wrong audience is targeted with an irrelevant approach, the whole process can fail. The approach used by PitchMe was the theme of "Historical Inventions and Innovation" on the target audience. The idea was to make the people feel like intellectuals rather than laymen. Again, this was an iterative process.

Smart or Short Testing was then carried out. The idea behind this phase was to make sure that the brand is pitched adequately during the Reaching Out stage. During Smart/Short Testing phase, the brand synopsis related material was sent to relevant startups, companies and people to validate it. Once the material was validated, the Reaching Out phase started. All available social media channels were used. In addition to that, the founders made use of all on going pitching events themselves. Founders are the brand, they structure the brand synopsis and despite having different approaches, the main idea remains the same. PitchMe also made use of online startup galleries to raise awareness about the company (e.g. EerliBird, StartUpTabs).

As mentioned earlier, market research and study is the soul of any branding process. And it cannot be stopped at any point. It not only defines the present actions and targets, but also potential ones. For PitchMe, it was and still is a manual process. Relevant entrepreneurs and product manufacturers were met and studied. It is an endless process because it not only supports the initial branding process, but assists in upgrading and modifying the branding model when needed.

5.5. Suggestions & Solutions – That Can Aid

5.5.1. Finding The Right People & Place

It is very important to find the right people to work with, and the right place to bring all the together. The work environment has great influence on achieving the goal.

...it was a great coincidence to meet and come across some great minds. And Finland does a great job in facilitating great minds with incubating programs and funding possibilities such as Demola New Factory.

Interviewee 2

5.5.2. Right Person With the Right Responsibility

It goes without saying that the right person for the job should get the relevant responsibility. It not only makes work efficient, but also aids in attaining the overall objective.

We make sure the right person has the right tasks so that the representation is adequate.

Interviewee 1

It is also very important to keep in mind that the right person is not always someone with years of experience and qualification in the area of branding and marketing.

I think in startups and SMEs it is important to have a dedicated, relevant person for branding. So that it is not pushed aside as something that is only seen or taken care of once in a while. Not necessarily someone who is an expert at branding, but anyone who is passionate about it.

Interviewee 2

5.5.3. Keeping It Simple & Realistic

A very common mistake these days in the area of branding and marketing is the practice of communicating too much and too complex information about a product or service in their message. And these personnel have justified reasons to do this, but it may possibly won't get the desired results. According to the President and CEO of Polaris Inc, Greg Stein, too much information can overwhelm the target audience so it is better to keep the

message simple. It does not mean that the target isn't smart enough, but at least they will care to read it.

5.5.4. Experiment & Improvise

It is not necessary to just go for benchmark branding methods. This does not mean that benchmark branding approaches do not work, but there is a possibility that new, unique and improvised strategies just might work better. Especially when it comes to online branding, it is not only easy but affordable.

In short, people should experiment crazy ideas. Because online, If you fail, not many people will see. And if you succeed, many will see. So it is a fun playground to experiment. You do not need to buy out something expensive to try out a new fun thing, but online you can try out something on a limited audience. If that limited audience likes it, you can take it forward. Also you can learn from what other people have tried out online. Tweak a little and picture it.

Interviewee 2

5.5.5. Exploit All Free Branding Opportunities

Companies with very small branding budgets can do well with their branding if they exploit all free and affordable branding platforms online. The results may come slow, but it always aids the branding process. And secondly, there is nothing to lose if it is a free opportunity and shows the business is functioning well. And this in return also helps in mass producing the word of mouth.

Other online branding strategies such as emailing lists, branding, affiliate marketing, blogging etc, we are doing them. And you have to do what you can do and afford to do. For example, we have an amazing blog regularly being updated. It is very important, especially a small company that wants to avail any available opportunity to gain a market share. We are currently talking with a partner to do sales for us, we have an email list, to make sure we are alive and kicking. We also use other social media such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook to get leads, especially from Twitter.

Interviewee 1

5.5.6. Focused, Sharp & To-The-Point Branding

To reach and stay in audience's mind, it is mandatory to have a memorable concept. This starts with properly defining the brand. According to Greg Stein (CEO, Polaris Inc.) this starts with understanding if it is a small or a big firm, expensive or inexpensive product, national or international, durable or disposable and such queries. And understanding this defines the brand and assists in focused, sharp and to the point branding.

5.5.7. Start Small & Build it

One of the keys is realizing that a brand is not always something very big from the start. It can be as simple as a phrase or a picture, which can later be expanded.

I reckon they (companies) think too big from the start. Brand in fact is not just a big chunk of marble you can throw on the table. You can start very small, and build it. Many SMEs and startups, they get a logo and build something around it. Once a company grows larger, and has sufficient resources to better furnish and polish their brand.

Interviewee 2

5.5.8. Differentiate

Differentiation is fundamental in branding. In a normal scenario, the product or the service is the main element that makes one stand out in the market. It could be its aesthetics, functionality or other such characteristics. But on many occasions, this differentiation is not quite apparent. So what can be done then? Greg Stein (CEO, President of Polaris Inc.) in his "The Nine Principles of Branding" insists on making one up. He further explains that it should not be a lie, but a feature that different and associate it with the product or service.

This is called the differentiation strategy. And in present intense markets, individual customers as well as mass purchasers, both look for products with certain unique features or functions (Cole Ehmke, 2011). Differentiation strategy if successfully executed, results into competitive advantage. According to Barone and Decarlo (2003), in order to attain and sustain competitive advantage, it is crucial to differentiate a product or service along features which are not only important but also important to the customers.

5.5.9. Feel & Live Your Brand

Branding represents the personality of a company, proper branding delivers the correct message to the customers, both existing and potential. What a company says and does, and how it is understood by the people is key here. And this cannot be defined unless companies start considering branding more than a mere business process. In order to reach people's lives, it is necessary to reach their minds first.

... because people want to experience in the real world. Internet is a channel, but it is not sufficient alone. For example you use internet for a campaign, to deliver your message and mission, but if you do something incorporation for example with a famous sports team, you are taking branding beyond the conventional branding strategies. You need to bring it people's personal lives. You have to live your brand, be passionate about your brand.

Interviewee 1

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6. Conclusion

The study is carried out to consider online and other novel branding strategies that SMEs and/or Startups can utilize as a branding aid to better brand themselves. The overall research objective was to understand the importance of online branding strategies for companies that cannot invest large financial and expert resources to their branding, and whether online and such novel branding approaches can provide a cost, time and resource effective solution. In order to complete this study, study of available literature and qualitative interviews is carried out.

Research and literature defined online and novel branding strategies as mandatory for all types and sizes of businesses. While interviews confirmed that with the use of such new approaches despite being slow, can aid branding of a product or a service. In Finland, where the market consists of large numbers of SMEs and ever growing number of Startups, the attitude towards the concept of branding needs to change, and many have already started changing their perspective.

Furthermore, the course of this study clarified the main hurdles and obstacles that are faced by SMEs and Startups. So, it is pivotal for all companies to consider branding as a key component of their business processes and educate themselves as much as they can. The study also outlined some key points that needed to be checked while branding;

- Finding the right people
- Assigning right job to the right person
- Keep It Simple (KIS)
- Don't be afraid of experimenting
- Use all available free branding channels
- Start small and build it.
- Be Different
- Feel and live your brand. It is a personality.

The best understanding of this study concluded online and novel branding strategies as a necessary aid for branding. Whether SME, Startup or large organizations. The outreach of internet and mobile technology is limitless, and when this is coupled with offline efforts, positives results are inevitable.

Ideate thoroughly with the right people involved. Never stop market research as it not only defines the brand synopsis, but also enables the company to modify the approach when needed. Internet is literally everywhere, ignore this and the brand dies before development. Free and less expensive methods such as social media networks, blogs,

galleries and industrial forums are few of the best online branding methods, it is a cardinal sin to ignore such channels.

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APPENDIX: Transcript of Interviews

Interviewee 1

Donna Lynne Kivirauma
CEO, Founder
TeamUp Oy.

Q.1: What was the motive behind starting SME TeamUp?

I have always been an entrepreneur at heart, with my own 3 companies in the past. With TeamUp, the motivation came from volunteer work such as fund raising as I had experience in FundRaising. It was difficult to get a job in Finland despite having experience in company leadership. The biggest problem I noticed here in Finland was to create value for companies, turning sponsorships for companies. The challenge here in Finland was sponsorship activation, how to get fans towards a business. And for that it required an easy solution that was not expensive. That is how I came up with the idea of TeamUp. And it was my passion to do something meaningful and positive for people. To give back more to the world than I take.

Q.2: Where do you and TeamUp Stand as an Entrepreneur and Entrepreneurship?

It is both a new idea plus reproducing an idea because I have done both. I introduced the idea of MyTutor which was my first business idea for tutoring service. It was about utilizing schools which were empty at night, using those spaces to go there and study, but the idea did not really took off because I got a teaching job. Then I started another company Commuter Alternative Resource Services (CARS), the idea was to reduce cars in Houston, Texas, USA. I was part of the activists to reduce cars coming to work places, and that really worked there. Then TeamUp is a totally new idea, we are doing what nobody else is doing. Everything actually goes to my motto that is “be the change you want to see in the world.” Reducing the cars in the workplace lanes was an outcome of that. In addition to that there was the gas crisis in Houston, I gave up my car and started using my bicycle, I took the action and it really worked in Houston.

Q.3: Do you have a certain industry or type of companies that you focus on?

Companies that doing sponsorships, we are focusing on them first. We changed our strategy recently, initially we were focusing on talents that would attract fans and eventually businesses who would market to them, but then we realized it was the total opposite; it is the businesses that attract the talents who attract the fans. And it would have really worked better if had this strategy in the start, we would have been further

ahead than where we are now but it is about “live and learn” after all. We have this great activation tool that businesses activate and give goals to their talents such as to bring fans. So we are focusing on any kind of businesses that are doing any kind of sponsorship activity.

One very important thing is to have the right people in your team, we have people who have put their heart and soul with passion into this company. And it is very important especially when you are into B2B as we are.

Q.4: What is your understanding of how Startups and SMEs in Finland look at “Branding”?

In a way, there is a lot of work that needs to be done especially for startups and SMEs in the area of Branding. There is Branding and then there is Brand Management, it is a continuous process as the market is always changing. And the minute you stop innovating and reevaluating, your business dies as there will always be someone else innovating and trying to steal away your leads and customers.

Q.5: Your company, TeamUp, the way I look at it is a branding platform for new talents but how do you execute your company’s branding processes, is there a specific department for that?

Since the workforce is quite small, we all are sharing tasks at the moment. We make sure the right person has the right tasks so that the representation is adequate. Our message that we want to go out has not changed since the beginning, our two core values; 1. Transparency, you do not need a profile on TeamUp to see it. And we are also transparent with our operations so that when we bring on a partner, everyone has a clear view of what is happening. 2. Give back more than you take, we are constantly trying to find ways to make others see and understand our core values. I make sure with our strategy and owner meetings so that we always maintain our core values.

Q.6: Study of available literature reveals that misunderstanding and misconception among SMEs about the branding process is one important reason keeping this small companies away from branding; such as considering the branding process as an expensive ordeal which mostly the big companies can afford to execute because of having the available resources. How do you comment on this?

I won’t say you need a lot of financial resources for this, but yes you do need some resources. And we have put every bit of our money into the development, and were left with no money for branding and marketing at all, yet we had this launch party, I had this idea of having winter ice castle with a white theme, and ice sculptures, drinks, food, cake, musicians, 200 guests but we had zero budget. But we had all these companies donate for us. We have partners who are helping us in putting a clear branding message and we are getting there. And if we had the money, we would have been further on the branding path,

but as I said, we are getting there. So basically, it is important to have a strategy and the skills to make it happen, even if you do not have the resources.

Q.7: TeamUp is about using Social Media, but how about other online branding strategies being used by Startups and SMEs to better brand themselves, especially when they do not have the resources to execute the conventional branding strategies?

Other online branding strategies such as emailing lists, branding, affiliate marketing, blogging etc, we are doing them. And you have to do what you can do and afford to do. For example, we have an amazing blog regularly being updated. It is very important, especially a small company that wants to avail any available opportunity to gain a market share. We are currently talking with a partner to do sales for us, we have an email list, to make sure we are alive and kicking. We also use other social media such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook to get leads, especially from Twitter. Each social media has its purpose, and if you are able to distinguish the purpose, people will come. The purpose of TeamUp is discovering and supporting talents, individuals and groups and shares it with businesses. This is what makes us unique compared to others.

Q.8: Do you think Internet and its resources alone provide a sole solution to small companies to brand itself, as mobile internet usage is ever growing globally?

I think internet is a tool for branding, but you still need to spend some time on other conventional methods. Internet alone in my opinion is not enough, because people want to experience in the real world. Internet is a channel, but it is not sufficient alone. For example you use internet for a campaign, to deliver your message and mission, but if you do something incorporation for example with a famous sports team, you are taking branding beyond the conventional branding strategies. You need to bring it people's personal lives. You have to live your brand, be passionate about your brand, and that cannot be done using the internet campaigns alone. That is our way of doing in TeamUp. To distinguish yourself, to be part of the community, you have to be reach out in the real world as well.

Interviewee 2

**Mr. Josef Pacal (CPO, PitchMe) and Mr. Miika Kenttämies (CMO, PitchMe)
PiTCHME.**

Q 1: What is Pitchme?

It is a platform where people can come and share ideas, pitch their businesses. In future companies could facilitate innovation and ideation, where you could find fascinating people and ideas.

Q 2: What is your definition of an SME, StartUp and where does Pitchme stand?

We will not say that we are an SME, but classify our self as a startup. It is not restricted to remain an SME in future. Startup is a business built to scale. But it is also up to anyone to define it as an SME, but we do not want that stigma.

Q 3: Why Finland for your business?

Actually, we started the company in USA, in Florida. We will relocate to USA. But it was a great coincidence to meet and come across some great minds. And Finland does a great job in facilitating great minds with incubating programs and funding possibilities such as Demola New Factory. We will be completely relocating to the US with full staff. We do have the options open to have functions both in US and Finland. But our CEO already has a strong network in the US, so relocating to US is what most likely we will do. Plus, online opportunities are better facilitated there.

Q 3: What is Branding, and how important it is for any business? And attitude towards branding in Finland.

It is fundamental! It is the second most important thing to the product. It is the personality of the company; it is how they present themselves. Branding also allows companies to connect with their potential customers. Branding is just not a logo, not just a set of colors or business cards. Branding has more to do with the message, the tone of voice you utilize - it is what you say and what you do and what people understand. If you align these three things in brand positioning, you ultimately have a strong brand. If you look at StartUps and SMEs and branding, and how they have adapted, and how much effort they put in a brand you would understand that it is one of the first things they would cut (unfortunately). I think this roots down to the understanding, especially in Finland where product and technology is code, and building the product is the most important thing you can do which Finland can learn from elsewhere, where existing concepts are made better, and over throwing existing companies with a better brand with their message and personality. In that sense, branding is not utilized or adapted as much as it should be in Finland. It is also important to understand that a brand in large corporations accounts for its validation. For example, coke won't be coke without its brand. Many conceive that a brand is something very large and that is not true. Brand can be something very simple.

Q 4: Attitude of people towards branding in Finland?

Brand is often dismissed as something someone else should take care of, for them. And it is not seen something valuable for the business. They think revenue comes from sales,

and product comes from development and brand is just a side product of marketing. Just a logo thing. That is how we see the way SMEs operate and the way they take branding. But it really depends on the business, whether or not focusing on the brand is killing them or not. In product centric and unsaturated markets, brand is not as important as it is in generic and saturated markets. For example a cheese store in a small village is the cheese Store there, but in New York, the cheese store is not enough. You need to have a brand there. The mentality here is that people do not really see brand or branding as public attitude for communication. They hate the feeling of buying a logo from someone. They are really concerned about their business, and less concerned about their presentation. Then again, if someone wants to be a small business in a small market and do not want to grow, they can ignore branding. But if they want to grow and expand the business, then branding is fundamental. A lot of new companies, founded by young people have a strong focus on branding. There are a lot of Finnish clothing companies emerging, where there is a lot of focus on the brand. In the clothing market, brand is everything.

Q 5: What do you think about the Branding operations in Startups and SMEs should be handled like. Should there be a dept or a dedicated person for it or the top management can just take care of it based on their experience?

I think in startups and SMEs it is important to have a dedicated, relevant person for branding. So that it is not pushed aside as something that is only seen or taken care of once in a while. Not necessarily someone who is an expert at branding, but anyone who is passionate about it. In a startup, it comes down to the team and what experience and skills they have to execute the brand. There is what we call the dream team, where there is a designer who targets and focuses on the brand. So for such companies, having a whole department for branding, or buying the services from a company is not necessary. More important is, someone who knows about it, and may be find a free lancer.

Q 6: Literature study says that many new companies misunderstand branding as an expensive ordeal. Your comment on this?

I think that is just a lame excuse for not focusing on branding. Branding is something what people see and what they hear, what they feel. All you need to do is think about what you want people to feel. And that is not too expensive, unless you need to hire someone specifically with a certain hourly rate. It is not an expensive ordeal. The people you hire, what they do: they learn what you do, and who your customers are. And they figure out how to facilitate that communication. And that is through branding. And that does not need to be an expensive and complex thing. It comes down to small tangible things such as hundreds of websites show your brand, communicate your message and deliver your message.

Q 7: Why SMEs and StartUps companies ignore Branding

I think it comes down to not understanding that branding is not difficult. Taking some of the basic principles of branding and thinking about it is the first step every startup and SME should take. Maybe reading blogs or a book about branding for a week can get them that knowledge. As mentioned earlier, branding is the alignment of the three components, what you do, how you communicate and what people understand. And then you have some basic visual components such as color. You do not need a logo when you start, you need a predictable typeface which is different than other predictable typefaces around. You have the color, you have the alignment of components, finding a unique font to use as a tone of voice and the message needs to be clear but catchy. If you are able to do that in a year or so, that can take care of the company for the next 3 to 4 years. And by that time the company will most likely have good financial resources to expand and improve its brand. So for a small company you do not need a huge branding operation, for large corporations it does. If you have a small boat, you can row it yourself or with a friend. But if it is a large vessel, you need a crew. (24 Minutes)¹

Q 8: How internet can assist with branding strategy

I think the branding strategy defines how to communicate to the target audience. It is about positioning and target audience. Not just age and location, who and what they like, who they listen to. And with internet, targeting to that specific audience is simple. You are far more likely to reach an audience on the internet compared to buying an ad in a magazine. You can funnel your message to a specific target audience. And with robust internet marketing platforms with increased data sharing technology, success rate is also increased.

Q 9: Current online branding strategies, conventional online method, any suggestion on a good online branding strategy that can help better brand an SME or startup

In short, people should experiment with crazy ideas. Because online, if you fail, not many people will see. And if you succeed, many will see. So it is a fun playground to experiment. You do not need to buy out something expensive to try out a new fun thing, but online you can try out something on a limited audience. If that limited audience likes it, you can take it forward. Also you can learn from what other people have tried out online. Tweak a little and picture it.

Q 10: Most common issues, problems faced by SMEs and Startups when it comes to brand management. And your suggestions to dealing with them.

I reckon they think too big from the start. Brand in fact is not just a big chunk of marble you can throw on the table. You can start very small, and build it. Many startups, they get a logo and build something around it. Once a company grows larger, and has sufficient resources to better furnish and polish their brand. What you say, your message is very important. For example our business is about great minds, smart people and brilliant ideas

emerge here so we try to encourage people that are a part of this great mind track. And our communication is much aligned.

Q 11: Can internet let alone be sufficient for branding?

Depends on what you do. If you are an internet company, by all means you do not need more than a couple of posters and business cards. But if you are a clothing company, any business that has a tangible presence in the real world, you absolutely need offline branding. You need to have your presence. For example, what is behind Google logo? It is mostly code and at Google the importance of the brand comes in at making the best coders wanting to come to Google. I think that is why it has such a high impact, everyone wants to work there. And Google can choose who they want. But when you have people involved, where you want people to come to you all the time then your offline presence is also important. So if the startup is an online company, it can simply start with online branding, and as it grows, later down the road it can work on its offline presence. Companies online can still have a feel to it, of course not as good as a company that has offline physical presence but still it has. It is difficult but possible. Many big companies when they started initially did not have much offline presence in the start. Main thing is how they use the internet to communicate to the audience.

So depending on the business, businesses can develop trust in potential clients even if the business only has online business. For example the service provided by a company starts on a cellular phone and ends on a laptop, offline presence is not that important. Every company can benefit from online and offline presence but it is not necessary to have offline presence.